REVEL

ELATION

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

REVELATION.

PRINCIPALLY IN AN

HISTORICAL POINT OF VIEW.

By

EBENEZER SMITH.

Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein.—Rev. 1:3.

Published for the author
by the Courier Publishing House
Ann Arbor, Mich

PREFACE.

To what a limited extent God appears upon the pages of history. His purposes and plans of redemption, through which Satan's kingdom is to be destroyed and his own kingdom established on the earth, have been so profoundly formed and executed in connection with current human events that they have been either entirely unperceived or recognized only in local and fragmentary ways by the general historian of the past.

Some of the main parts of these profoundly deep laid purposes and plans have been portrayed in the figurative representations of the book of Revelation. But these, thus far, have been either entirely unsolved or to a large extent only solved in the same local and fragmentary ways. And thus the deep broad channel of God's purposes and plans, that touches upon all nations and takes in all mankind, has been recognized only in a partial and local way.

But that it will always be so is not at all probable. We are told of a time coming when "the mystery of God should be finished." And it is not probable that he who is the "King of kings and Lord of lords," to whom "every knee shall bow," and "every tongue shall confess," will always allow his beneficent purposes and plans to be so largely hidden from those whose worship and service he seeks. The greater the knowledge and intelligent conceptions of the Being worshiped and the higher and better the worship. Therefore the revenue of glory and honor accruing to the throne and crown of "the Prince of the kings of the

earth" will be continually increased as these deep laid and beneficent purposes and plans are more and more unfolded to the view of his intelligent creatures.

To what extent these purposes and plans of God are more fully unfolded than heretofore by the exposition of the book of Revelation contained in the following pages, each reader will be his own judge. While the matter pertaining to the particulars in the work has been largely obtained from the works of other authors—as must of necessity be the case—the credit for the general plan of the work lies between the author himself and the Holy Spirit, at whose call, as he verily believes, the work has been done.

Perhaps it may be of interest to the reader to know that the writer is not generally inclined to be radical in his views nor changeful in his habits. He has never changed his residence, and he has been a member of the same church for fifty years, and a deacon in it forty years.

If the perusal of these pages shall inspire in the reader like devout and reverent feelings to those the writer has experienced in the unfolding of their subject-matter, the spare time of eighteen years devoted to their preparation will not have been spent in vain. That this may be the pleasant and happy experience of each reader is the earnest prayer of the author. And so may we each become joyful participants in that sublime ascription of chapter 5:13, in which every creature is represented as saying: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!"

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August 15, 1898.

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INTRODUCTION.

The opening words of the book of Revelation are "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass." Now from the character of the Supreme Ruler of the world we might expect that these things would be among the most important things that should come to pass upon the earth, and therefore that they would be most likely to be found among the things recorded upon the pages of history. But many of these things are of such a character that they could not be so fully understood as to be definitely traced upon the pages of history until they were in an advanced stage of fulfillment. The Reformation and consequent rise of Protestantism, and the passing of the balance of national power to the Protestant nations so that they should become the dominant nations of the earth, and especially modern missions, have done much towards unraveling the thread of history pertaining to these prophecies; for there is a thread running through them all, and rightly following that there is beauty and harmony, but away from it there is confusion and uncertainty.

As understood by the writer, this book contains an outline of the history of Christendom principally given in metaphor. But this outline does not consist of one consecutive whole, but rather of several series given in the book in such close connection that their respective relations to each other and to the whole have generally been overlooked; and herein has been one of the chief difficulties in the way of understanding the book. Each of these series is designed to unfold some particular subject or line of history by touching upon and portraying the principal characteristics and the principal events pertaining to such organizations and combinations—whether religious, civil, or military, or adverse or favorable to the kingdom of Christ—as come within its scope. And then again, as a rule, each one of these series begins at or near the commencement of the

Christian era and extends, so far as can now be determined, down to the end of the Present Dispensation or very nearly so. Upon the completion of a series there is necessarily a return—but denoted in the book only by the change of subject—to the earlier point of time for the purpose of taking up another series, and so on to the end of the whole.

As a rule the natural order of time is followed in each series, but to this rule there are occasional exceptions; one of these exceptions is found in the seventh chapter where from considering modern missions as represented by the "angel ascending from the east" and the consequent breaking up of national systems of religion, the writer of the book turns to the earlier period of intolerance to show the limited number of the redeemed during this period as represented by the sealing of the hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of Israel. Another exception is found in chapter seventeen, where upon viewing the great harlot in the wilderness her personal identity is traced backward as to time in order to show whence she came.

In writing upon this book the author had no preconceived interpretation to uphold; therefore, under the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit as he firmly believes, he was open to conviction wherever the evidence led in sufficient force reasonably to convince. If he has hit some of the long and generally accepted views of interpretation on some things in the book and moved them out of their assigned place,—for instance, such as that which regarded the time that the Church was in the wilderness as being during the Dark Ages,—it is not because he would purposely change such views, but because in the unfolding of the subject they came into the place they occupy and exactly fitted in there and could not be made to fit in elsewhere.

From his earliest recollections of Bible reading the author has frequently turned to these mysterious prophecies with longing desires to see them more clearly interpreted, yet he had no expectation of being used by the Holy Spirit as an instrument especially to aid in unfolding their meaning. But at family worship, on the 4th of December, 1879, while reading the seventh chapter of this book, which was the selection for daily reading given in connection with the Sunday school lesson for the following Sunday, the thought that the "angel ascending from the east" represented the modern mis-

sionary work came with intense vividness and force; and this was quickly followed by a second thought that the "four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth," represented the religious intolerance that prevailed almost all over the earth through the existence of intolerant national systems of religion. And from these first impressive and abiding thoughts received on that morning began a train of thinking and research that soon led to the opening up of the general line of interpretation on the book, but which for the more complete unfolding of the subject and the greatest attainable degree of perfection in the work, has been continued through the intervening years with as much assiduity as the time and ability of the writer would admit.

The beginning of this work was during an extended time of especial prayer, when of all times in the life of the writer there was most sweet and tender communion with God. And as the work progressed the deep and abiding impression made upon the mind that morning, together with the conscious abiding influence and aid of the Holy Spirit, matured into a firm conviction that it was a divine call to do the work. It is not claimed that this work is perfect; the instrument the Holy Spirit has used in its preparation is too imperfect for that; further developments in the fulfillment of these prophecies and further researches doubtless, in course of time, will make some modifications necessary.

Perhaps it may be well to say that the historical information has been mostly obtained from works in common use and easily procurable, such as Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" Hallam's "Middle Ages," Smith's Students' Series; Bryce's "Holy Roman Empire;" Lodge's "Modern Europe;" and Neander's "History of the Christian Religion and Church," Volume I. But the writer has gleaned important information from many other sources; indeed, perhaps nearly every publication that gives any considerable amount of reliable historical information pertaining to Christendom or any important part of it, contains something bearing upon the subject.

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

CHAPTER I.

THE PREFACE. Vs. 1-3.

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

1. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass.** All the works of God in relation to men, whether in creation or redemption, have been performed through Jesus Christ; therefore he is now the proper person to reveal to his servants the future conflicts and trials that will attend the progress of his kingdom on earth through the opposition of the powers of darkness, and its final victory over every foe, and the ultimate exaltation of his people to the glory and felicity of heaven.—**And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.** In chapter 22:9, this angel describes himself to John as "thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book," which rather intimates that he may have been one of the ancient prophets. If on the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah had sufficient knowledge of future events to speak of Christ's "decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that one of them may have been sufficiently informed in relation to future events to be sent on such an errand as this.

2. **Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.** This whole book is "the word of God," for God gave it to Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ bore witness to it by the words he spake to his servant, and by

sending his angel to show him "all things that he saw." And the witness of the beloved disciple who had enjoyed the most intimate association with his Lord while on earth, should be regarded as worthy of the utmost confidence.

3. **Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.** The information contained in this prophecy is of the utmost importance, whether historical, doctrinal, or practical; for, although it is prophecy, and hence in its fulfillment becomes more or less historical, yet, incidentally, it is also intensely doctrinal and practical. But it is clothed in symbolic language hard to be understood, and which can only be read so as to be understood by that devout and prayerful study that will be honored by the helpful influences of the Holy Spirit.—**For the time is at hand.** Much depends upon a proper understanding of such expressions as this, and the one above—"which must shortly come to pass." Most likely the progress of events under this prophecy had already begun; therefore as the ages pass along, each individual reader and hearer would have some personal relation to these things, and perhaps would have to make some personal decision in reference to them. But their ultimate completion, according to man's conception of time, was far away in the distant future beyond many intervening centuries. But when we remember "that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," it will help us to understand these and other similar expressions as used in this book.

THE SALUTATION. Vs. 4-8.

4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

4. **John to the seven churches which are in Asia.** Asia was the Roman province in the southwestern part of what is now called Asia Minor.—**Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and**

which was, and which is to come. The Eternal One. From the connection in which this expression here stands, it seems to designate the first person of the Trinity,—God the Father.—**And from the seven Spirits which are before his throne.** This expression, together with other similar ones further on in this book, doubtless designates the Holy Spirit. Perhaps he is thus designated more especially in reference to his operations and the perfection of them than to his personality. For he could be present in each one of all the seven churches at the same time, just as much as he could be in only one were he solely confined to it; and the same may be said of his presence in any larger number of churches, or of his presence in the multitude of human hearts upon which he operates at the same time.

5. **And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness.** He is the faithful witness of God to make known to men the true character of God, the nature of sin, and the way of redemption. Through him it has pleased God to reveal unto us all that we know of divine truth.—**And the first begotten of the dead.** The victor over death, who first rose from the dead in an incorruptible body as the pledge and prelude of the resurrection of all.—**And the prince of the kings of the earth.** As Creator, he had the right of sovereignty over the kings of the earth; but, through the instigation of Satan, rebellion on the part of man and consequent death interfered with the exercise of this right; but now, as the conqueror of death in the work of redemption, he has obtained the additional right of sovereignty by reason of his redeeming work, through which it is declared that God hath "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named" (Eph. 1: 20, 21).—**Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.** Wonderful love! Wonderful washing! Wonderful cleansing power!

6. **And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.** Or more correctly rendered, hath made us a kingdom and priests, etc. Under the Jewish law the priesthood occupied a mediatorial position between the people and God; through their sacrificial offerings and intercessions the people approached God and worshiped; but now, through the perfect mediation of Christ, each one can directly approach God without the intervention of any hu-

man priesthood; and thus, in this respect, all stand on a perfect equality except as their consecration of heart and life may bring them into closer union with God.—**To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.** For he who hath thus redeemed us is worthy of eternal and universal glory and dominion; and all such as are thus redeemed and exalted will heartily join in this ascription of praise, which will be transmitted by the successive countless numbers of the redeemed through time, and upon their transferrence to their heavenly home, taken up again and prolonged forever and ever.

7. **Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him.** In the preceding verse the redeeming work of Christ is brought into view; but in this, his final retributive work, when he shall come again, and "every eye shall see him," together with those who drove the nails and thrust the spear, or by their acts assented thereto. To the impenitent "kindreds of the earth" his coming will be a sorrowful event; but on the other hand the redeemed can joyfully say,—**Even so. Amen.**

8. **I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.** The Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ have each joined in this salutation. And now, do they, as the eternal triune God, join in these closing words of it? or, are these the words of the Lord Jesus only? Probably, of the Lord Jesus only. For the connection of these words to the brief summary of his work contained in the part of this salutation pertaining to him, seems to favor this view; and the important part he is to take in these prophecies as the Divine Revealer of them, also favors this view. And then these impressive assertions of the eternity of his being, equal with those which express the eternity of the Father in verse 4, exalt his person and prepare the mind to receive these prophecies as veritable and true. And they also stand as a perpetual barrier against those who would deprive him of his divinity and lower him to the level of only a good man and a worthy human teacher.

THE VISION OF THE LORD. VS. 9-20.

9 I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet,

11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Epesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;

13 And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.

14 His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire;

15 And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.

16 And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:

18 I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.

9. **I John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.** John was especially the brother and companion of his brethren in the seven churches in the trial of persecution that, under the Emperor Domitian, was then being carried on against the Christians. He had been banished to the isle of Patmos "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ," where, most probably about the year 95 or 96*, he saw the visions and received the communications recorded in this book.

10, 11. **I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.** Most likely the Lord's day was now generally observed as the Christian Sabbath. On this particular Lord's day, such an unusual measure of the

*This date is given because the weight of evidence that has come under the notice of the writer favors this view; but should any prefer the earlier date that fixes the writing of this book in the reign of the Emperor Nero, about the year 68, it will make no material difference to our interpretation of the book. And the same may be said of any intervening date.

Spirit fell upon him as to enable him to hear spiritual voices and to see spiritual forms that otherwise would be unheard and unseen. In other respects, doubtless, it was an ecstatic joy, of which, perhaps, every truly devout believer may form some conception from like experiences.—**And heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.** Again, in these impressive words, the Lord asserts to his beloved disciple the eternity of his being. But by some late critics these words are regarded as being supplied by copyists; but if they are not genuine here, these same expressions are unquestionably applied to Christ elsewhere in this book.—**And, what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.** These churches were situated in the small but important Roman province in the southwestern part of Asia Minor, and it has been said they are mentioned in the order in which a person journeying from Ephesus might come to them respectively.

12. **And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks.** These "seven golden candlesticks"—or lamp-stands as more correctly rendered—remind one of the seven-branched candlestick described in Ex. 25:31–37. But instead of the seven branches extending from "his shaft" as a single base on which they stand, these seem severally to stand around the Lord; perhaps thus it is indicated that there is a change from the organic unity of existence and worship in the Jewish economy to a severalty in existence and worship in the churches of the Christian economy, that now have Christ as the organic center around which they stand.

13. **And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man.** John would readily identify the Son of man with whom he had been so familiar during his earthly ministry and whose risen body he had also so intimately seen on several occasions after his resurrection. The significance of the position of the Son of man is explained in verse 20.—**Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.** He was therefore clothed in a royal and priestly manner; indicative, perhaps, of the kingly and priestly offices belonging to him as the Redeemer.

14, 15. **His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters.** This description reminds us of the Ancient of days in Daniel's vision (Dan. 7:9): "Whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." And also, of the "man" whom he saw by the side of the river Hiddekel: "Clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz: His body was also like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." (Dan. 10:5, 6). John had seen the Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration, when, "As he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering." But now in glory transcending, if possible, the transfiguration glory, in vision he sees and, when his fears have subsided if not before, recognizes his beloved Lord again.

16. **And he had in his right hand seven stars.** The significance of which is explained in verse 20.—**And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword.** Doubtless this sword represents "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God," which is said to be "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Eph. 6:17. and Heb. 4:12—**And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.** Thus it would equal if not surpass the dazzling brightness of the most glorious object within the range of human view.

17. **And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.** Thus he was overcome by that fear which is natural to man when suddenly placed in the immediate presence of such an august supernatural being.—**And he laid his right hand upon me.** After his resurrection when the Lord suddenly appeared unto his disciples, to allay their fears he said unto them, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see." But now, to quiet his fears and reassure him, he lays his own right hand upon his beloved disciple and says,—**Fear not; I am the first and the last.** And therefore he must be the Eternal One as further described in the next verse.

18. **I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen.** Such language John would readily perceive could apply only to his own beloved Lord, whom he had seen living, whom he had seen dead, whom he had seen alive again, and who henceforth should live for evermore.—**And have the keys of hell and of death.** Keys are symbols of power, and the words "hell" and "death" are transposed in the Revised Version. The apostle had seen proofs of Christ's power over death, not only in the cases in which for the time being at least, he had deprived death of his prey by healing those who were regarded as sick unto death, but in the cases of those already dead whom he had raised to life again; and also in the case of his own resurrection. And doubtless John fully believed the words of Jesus he himself had recorded (John 5:28, 29): "For the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation." Therefore, through the power of God, "having loosed the pains of death" by his own resurrection, when the appointed time shall come, as death's conqueror, he shall unlock its gates and bring forth the dead; and then, as "he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead," assign the righteous unto life eternal, and the wicked unto death eternal.

19. **Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.** These expressions doubtless are simply an impressive way of directing the apostle to write not only the mystery of the seven stars, etc., as explained in the next verse, but also the whole of these Apocalyptic visions from beginning to end.

20. **The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.** The word angel means a messenger. And these angels are generally regarded as the pastors or presiding officers of these churches, who are the messengers of God unto them to make known not only the contents of these letters, but also "all the counsel of God" as given in his Word.—**And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.** Therefore the position of the Lord "in the midst of the seven candtesticks," would represent him as being in the midst of the seven churches;

where his eyes "as a flame of fire" would behold the faithfulness or unfaithfulness, the purity or impurity, in life and doctrine of each church as a body, and also of each individual member of these churches. And undoubtedly the Lord's position among these churches, and his scrutiny of them, may be regarded as representative of a like intimate and scrutinizing relation to all his churches through all succeeding time.

CHAPTER II.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF EPHESUS. Vs. 1-7.

1 Unto the angel of the church of Epehsus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4 Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place. except thou repent.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

1. **Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write.** Although these messages are addressed to the angel—the pastor or the presiding officer, as he is variously called by different writers—of each of these churches, yet they are addressed to them as being the proper medium of communication with the churches. These angels are to act as the messengers of Christ to make known the contents of each message, and when this service is performed, so far as appears

in these messages, the individuality of each messenger seems to become merged in the church; so that in the application of the contents of the message he occupies a position in common with other individual members of the church. And thus, each church as a whole, messenger and members, individually and collectively, is to take such action as to bring both the individual life and the church life within it, into conformity with the teaching of the divine message. They also share alike in the commendation or censure contained in the message.—**These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.** He who thus intimately holds his servants in his right hand, and familiarly walks in the midst of his churches, sees and knows all that is commendable or blamable in each church together with the angel or pastor addressed, by whose teaching it would be largely molded and guided, especially in that age when its members were so dependent upon their teachers for instruction on account of the lack of means for acquiring knowledge.

2. **I know thy works, and thy lobour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil.** We have here the picture of a busy church, commendably full of works, of wearisome labor, and of patient endurance.—**And thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars.** Such claimants usually have some followers; and therefore, such work is very trying, and needs to be done with judicious care, and according to Scriptural rules, and in a Christlike spirit of true meekness and fear.

3. **And hast borne, and hast patience.** There had been perseverance, constancy, and stability in all these arduous and trying works. The detection and expulsion of unsound and unfaithful members is a trying and painful work, and cannot well be done without unity of feeling and action; and this, added to their activity in publishing the good news of salvation in the community and in the region round about, was worthy of praise.—**And for my name's sake hast laboured.** "For my name's sake"—in other words, for Christ's sake—is the true motive that should actuate all Christian labor. How much Christians lose by not keeping in view this motive!—**And hast not fainted.** Hast not become wearied and tired out, but hast continued to be active and zealous.

4. **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.** Back of all this commendable activity and zeal, which has been prompted by their first, deep, pure love to Christ, he "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks" could detect the waning of the fervor of that first love; through which, doubtless, insidiously and unperceived by them, they were drifting away from him, into a cold, unspiritual, and worldly condition.

5. **Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.** "Thou hast left thy first love" is the substance of the "somewhat against thee." And is this so great a fall as to require such particular notice? So it seems to be in the estimation of Christ. This first clinging love to him is the mainspring of the life of his churches. And upon its decline, notwithstanding their outward show of zeal and piety, they are spiritually dying, and need to repent and return to that warm, active, earnest spirit of love that the new convert experiences toward the Savior lately found.—**Or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.** The removal of the candlestick would be the extinction of the church as a light of Christ. The admonition may have availed for a time; but if so, it was followed by a relapse. And although this church was an important one for several centuries, it shared in the decline of true religion in all that region, of which it may be said, "It was once a garden but is now a desert." Dr. Malcolm, in his Bible Dictionary, under the article "Ephesus", says: "It suffered exceedingly in its various sieges and captures by the Saracens, Tartars and Turks, and has gradually sunk to nothing." And thus the light, so bright at first, and then dimmed by the loss of the "first love", finally went out in Mohammedan darkness; and the site of the city is now a scene of ruins.

6. **But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.** Though the Lord has "somewhat" against this church, yet it has not drifted so far away from him but that it still hates that which is offensive to him. Remarks on the Nicolaitans are reserved for verse 15.

7. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** Although these messages to the churches are the words of Christ, yet they are also the words of the Holy Spirit, who

speaks in the Word of Inspiration in harmony with the will of Christ. "He that hath an ear" is one who will attentively listen to these messages,—is one who will endeavor to investigate and understand them, with the purpose in view of avoiding whatever is condemned in them, and of adhering to whatever is commended in them.—**To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.** In this message the Lord has spoken of false teachers, of false doctrines, and of declining love, and these things would be especially included in the things to be overcome; but with these would also be included whatever else might hinder Christian faithfulness and Christian progress unto the end of this life. "The tree of life" reminds us of the one in the midst of the Garden of Eden, of which, after the fall, it is said: "And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Gen. 3: 22, 23). For then, after the seed of spiritual death was planted in his being by the fall, he was in no fit condition to partake of the fruit of the tree of life; but now, the seeds of spiritual death being rooted up and those of spiritual life planted in their place through Christ, the unfitness is removed, and the overcoming believer shall "have right to the tree of life," which, further on in this book, is represented as standing upon the bank of the "river of water of life" in the Heavenly City, bearing a varied and bountiful supply of celestial fruit for all its glorified inhabitants.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF SMYRNA. Vs. 8-11.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

8. **And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive.** These introductory expressions seem well fitted to give comfort to

this tried church; for, doubtless, its members had been informed of Christ as the eternal Creator, and also that his redeeming work involved his life of trial, his martyr as well as sacrificial death, and his triumphant resurrection; and this would tend to assure them that in the end they too would come off victorious, notwithstanding their present poverty, trials, and persecution.

9. **I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich).** This church, like that of Ephesus, seemed to abound in Christian activity. Among the things that were causes of tribulation were the pretenses of false professors and the persecution mentioned below. And while it was poor in the things of this world, doubtless it was rich in faith, in grace, and in treasures in heaven.—**And I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.** Whether these false professors, who pretended to be the Lord's people while they were not, but were Satan's, had originated within the church, but, like the false apostles at Ephesus, had been tried and excluded, or whether they had arisen without it and assumed an attitude of opposition to it, we are not informed; but now, undoubtedly, they are without the church. The representation of them as a "synagogue" seems to imply that they were sufficiently numerous and united to be in some way associated together as a body. From this passage it appears that for one to claim to be a Christian when he is not, is blasphemy.

10. **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer.** While suffering in itself considered is undesirable and to be avoided, yet nearly all great achievements are, to a greater or less extent, wrought out in some way or other through suffering.—**Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison.** Thus Satan is pointed out as the real source of persecution. The civil and ecclesiastical rulers, or other persons who have persecuted God's people, have done so under his influence and direction, notwithstanding some of them, in other respects, may have made a fair show of being themselves God's people.—**That ye may be tried.** James in his epistle, (1:12) says: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation [trial]: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." And such trials purge out the dross of worldly elements from the church, and leave within it only pure gold,—the true and tried ones,

who then cling to Christ in a closer and more vital union.—**And ye shall have tribulation ten days.** This tribulation should not always last, the Lord had set a definite limit to it, and beyond this their persecutors should have no power against them.—**Be thou faithful unto death.** Let each one live a faithful Christian life, bearing these and all other trials with fortitude and constancy "unto death," whether it be a natural death or a martyr's death.—**And I will give the a crown of life.** An incorruptible "crown"; a "crown of glory that fadeth not away." As Paul also says, "A crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).

11. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** This admonition, which is repeated at or near the close of each of these messages to the seven churches, has already been noticed in verse 7.—**He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.** The "second death" is to be "cast into the lake of fire," as we are told in chapters 20:14, and 21:8. But he who overcomes these especial trials pointed out, as well as all those common to human life, and is faithful to the end, will be entitled to the crown of life, and "shall inherit all things;" and therefore, "the second death" shall have no power over him.

Dr. Gill, in his Commentary, traces this church down to the eighth century. Smyrna is now one of the most important commercial cities of the Levant, and contains a larger proportion of such Christians as are found in those parts than any other place in that region.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF PERGAMOS. VS. 12-17.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

1· But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16 Repent; or else I will come unto the quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.

12. **And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges.** This sword, already noticed in chapter 1:16, represents the Word of God, which the Lord uses to discern and correct the faults and imperfections of his servants, and to judge and slay his enemies. And the bearer of this sword has the knowledge and the power to bring to pass all that he has promised or threatened.

13. **I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is.** Here we learn that God takes account of the favorable or unfavorable circumstances that surround his churches; and doubtless, the same is also true in reference to individuals. Here Satan dwelt in some such especial way as to exert influence and power that were more than ordinary hindrances to the work of the church.—**And thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr.** Their loyalty to the "name" and "faith" of Christ is so strong that the taking away of one of their faithful members by the cruel hand of persecution does not intimidate or dishearten them; but rather it seems so conspicuously to prove their loyalty to him that it adds strength to these words of commendation. The word "faith" here doubtless includes the truths believed as well as simply trust or belief in Christ.—**Who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.** Satan has already been pointed out as the instigator of persecution; and where his "seat" [throne] is, there we might expect persecuting power of the utmost severity. Who Antipas was we are not informed.

14. **But I have a few things against thee.** Although this church was true to Christ—was commendably loyal to his name and steadfast in his faith, yet there were some censurable things practiced in it.—**Because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.** From Num. 31:16, it appears that Balaam counseled the Moabites through female influence to call the Israelites unto the sacrifices of their gods; and in complying with such invitations they committed the

sins mentioned in Num. 25:1–3. And in this church it seems there were those who, perhaps from some unsanctified ideas, or motives of policy, permitted and perhaps advised its members to attend the pagan festivals of the times; and thus fell into like sins. Here we may learn one of Satan's covert ways of drawing God's people into sin, which is by instigating people of the world in a pleasant, winning way to induce Christians to participate in popular worldly recreations and practices. And thus Christians bring upon themselves the displeasure of God.

15. **So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.** For "which thing I hate" the Revised Version, following the marginal reading, substitutes "in like manner." The Nicolaitans are said to have been antinomian in belief. And in rejecting the law, instead of leading pure and holy lives, they turned the grace of God into lasciviousness; holding that Christ had expiated what the law would have punished, and therefore they were freed from its penalty. And thus as Israel had been led into lewd and idolatrous practices through the teaching of Balaam, in like manner Christians would be led into sins--perhaps similar sins—through the teaching of the Nicolaitans. As we have seen, the church of Ephesus had come into external contact with the Nicolaitans, but here they were within the church itself.

16. **Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.** While the Lord now comes to the church for correction, he will not fight against it as a whole, but against those who were guilty of the sins specified; and yet in some sense the whole church must be affected. In the inscription at the beginning of the epistle to this church, the Lord introduces himself as "he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;" and now his purpose appears; for, unless they repent, he will have especial use for it, either in the correction or in the cutting off of these sinning ones.

17. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** For remarks on this passage see verse 7.—**To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna.** The manna of the wilderness was the type, of which Christ as the bread of life is the antitype. Therefore Christ, the unseen, the all-sustaining and the all-satisfying portion of the soul, is himself "the hidden manna;" as he himself taught (John 6:31–35).—**And will give him a**

white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it. This use of the "white stone" is supposed by different writers to be an allusion to various ways in which such stones were used in ancient times: As upon the breast-plate of the Jewish high-priest, on the twelve stones of which the names of the twelve tribes were written; or, as at the Olympic games, where the victor received a white stone upon which his name and reward were inscribed; or, as in judicial decisions among the Greeks, where, in the suffrages of the judges, a white stone denoted acquittal and a black one condemnation; or, as a token of private or family friendship, which, upon presentation by the bearer at the home of the giver, secured to him its hospitality. But however this may be, it is best to regard this "white stone" as representing the personal evidence of acceptance which the Christian receives from Christ at conversion, and the "new name" that of adoption into the family of Christ; both of which are so largely personal matters between the soul and its Savior, that others can not read the one, nor with entire certainty know the other. But as the recipient overcomes especial trials and temptations, he will be continually receiving fresh evidences of these endearing relations to Christ; and the lively consciousness of their existence will help him over other trials and conflicts, until the end is reached, and he is welcomed home, triumphant victor among the redeemed in heaven.

The church in Pergamos continued in existence more than eight hundred years. And the city under a somewhat changed name still exists, and is said to contain between twenty and thirty thousand inhabitants, among whom there are a few nominal Christians.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF THYATIRA. Vs. 18–29.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass;

19 I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

20 Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23 And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall

know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25 But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

28 And I will give him the morning star.

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

18. **And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God.** In chapter 1:13, the Lord is described as "One like unto the Son of man;" and therefore either appellation may be applied to him who is the God-man.—**Who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.** The Lord's "eyes like unto a flame of fire" were about to fix their scrutinizing gaze upon this church, and his burnished feet to walk among its members, that he might know its condition and discern its ways.

19. **I know thy works, and charity** [love], **and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.** In the Revised Version, the last clause is rendered, "And that thy last works are more than the first." Thus it is indicated that there had been a growth in this place since its organization in these commendable activities and graces mentioned, notwithstanding the existence of those things condemned below.

20. **Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.** Much the same things were charged against the church of Pergamos, but the description here seems to indicate a worse form of idolatry. Jezebel was the wife of King Ahab, and through her influence the idolatrous worship of Baal was extensively introduced into the kingdom of Israel. Therefore to be true to the original, this representative Jezebel, whoever she might be, must be a leader in teaching doctrines and practices so entirely foreign to those belonging to a true Christian church, that they would bear a relation to this church similar to that which Baal worship bore to Israel in Ahab's time.

21. **And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.** The Lord had not come out in judgment against her as he now proposes to do, but had graciously given her opportunity for repentance.

22. **Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.** The threat, "I will cast her into a bed," intimates the suffering of enervating sickness and pain, if not death; and thus some providential visitation is indicated by which she would be troubled, and her activities and influence weakened, if not wholly destroyed. And the unrepenting ones associated with her should also suffer the consequent "tribulation" incurred by their sinful course of life.

23. **And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts.** It seems that this teaching had taken sufficient root to promise a growth, whether retained in the church or expelled from it; for there should be children or successors to it, who would perpetuate it, either in unbroken succession, or by causing it to reappear after a time of suspension. The death threatened should be inflicted in such a way as to show the Lord's scrutiny and knowledge of the whole inner being of each church and of each individual in it. Therefore, it must have been either such a visitation of natural death as to be evidently a judgment from God, or else—which is more likely—it must have been a spiritual decline or death so manifest to the true spiritual churches of Christ as to conclusively show that the searcher of "the reins and hearts" had been among these "children," and found them so unworthy and wicked that he had withdrawn his living presence from among them; and although they might still retain the name of a church, evidently they would be spiritually dead. And although this state of things may not have followed at Thyatira to such an extent as to attract especial historical notice, yet such a type of church existence was certainly afterwards developed.—**And I will give unto every one of you according to your works.** The evil works of those who held these erroneous doctrines and followed these sinful practices, would call for the Lord's judgments upon the doers of them; while, on the other hand, blessings would be the portion of those who maintained pure doctrines and pure lives.

24. **But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak.** It appears that this doctrine which they taught had in it "the depths of Satan;" though it might claim great depths of knowledge, and seem attractive, yet it was specious, and deceitful, and operated in Satan's favor. The "you" who are addressed, and the "rest," relate to the same persons, and include all in this church who did not hold this doctrine. And to these the Lord says,—**I will put upon you none other burden.** He would give them no further charge, only this in reference to this Jezebel, her doctrines, her associates, and their successors.

25. **But that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.** Those who are addressed in this and the preceding verse are in good spiritual and working condition, unto which they are counseled to "hold fast till I come,"—till he should come to call them individually from their faithful service on earth to the service of heaven; or, perhaps the meaning is that, through a succession of persevering members, they should "hold fast" their faithfulness until the Lord should come and relieve them of these special trials; or, it may be that the time of the Lord's coming spoken of here will be his second coming. And although this church failed to keep this counsel in the latter sense, yet others would successively arise who would endeavor to keep it; and therefore it was appropriate counsel.

26, 27. **And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end.** Unto what end? Primarily to the end of each individual life; but, doubtless, successively also unto the end of each of God's plans for the accomplishment of what follows. And thus each one, as he overcometh in his day, contributes toward the general result. —**To him will I give power** [authority] **over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.** From the second Psalm it appears that the Son "received" the rulership of the nations from the Father; and of the Son it is there said, "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." But in this work the Lord associates with himself his faithful followers, as appears from chapter 19:14, 15: "And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations;

and he shall rule them with a rod of iron." And this "power over the nations" which the Lord here promises to his overcoming servants, will appear from time to time, as we trace the progress of his kingdom through this book. And although no single unassisted one may shiver a nation, yet surely the Lord uses the faithful, persistent, overcoming life of each to a greater or less extent as a means towards accomplishing these great results.

28. **And I will give him the morning star.** "The morning star" is the harbinger of day, and represents the hope that through God's favor there is a brighter day coming,—perhaps a brighter day to this church. But if we apply it individually, each believer hopes for a brighter day coming, if not in this life, surely in the life to come. And this hope comforts and strengthens the Christian in his journey to the Celestial City, where earth's darkness will be over, and "there shall be no night there."

29. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** This admonition has already been noticed in verse 7.

Dr. Gill traced the existence of the Church of Thyatira down to the eighth century. The city now contains one or two thousand houses, and is called Ak Hisar.

CHAPTER III.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF SARDIS. VS. 1–6.

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

1. **And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.** According to the view given on the like expression in chapter 1:4, the expression "the seven Spirits of God" is used to designate the Holy Spirit; of whom it is said (John 3:34): "For God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" [the Son]; and of whom the Son says: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you anothor Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). We should not regard Christ as having the Holy Spirit in the sense of a subordinate, but rather in the sense of an equal associated with him in the work of redemption. The relation of the work of the Holy Spirit to that of Christ, as dependent on it and supplemental to it, is perhaps the reason that the relation of the Holy Spirit to Christ the Son is thus expressed in this and other similar passages in this book. "The seven stars," as already explained, "are the angels of the seven churches," or their pastors.—**I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.** Here was the outward visible form and works of a church, the church machinery was here, but it was destitute of that inner spiritual life which is in reality the only true life of a church.

2. **Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.** Notwithstanding the imperfect works and inanimate condition of this church, there were some faithful members in it, and doubtless also some good things which if carefully watched and strengthened or established might be the means of restoring its spiritual life.

3. **Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.** This language implies that they had received especial favors, and heard correct instruction; and these things they are exhorted to remember, and hold fast unto them. But wherein they had failed to do so they are exhorted to repent and return to their first devotion and faithfulness.—**If therefore thou shalt not watch I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.** This sudden and unexpected

coming undoubtedly would be some form of visitation that would be a judgment upon them for their continuance in their indifferent condition, notwithstanding the warning the Lord has just given them. And this visitation would result either in correcting the prevailing evils or else in ultimately removing their candlestick.

4. **Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments.** Contact with death was defiling, but these were neither "defiled" by the death complained of in this church, nor by any corrupt works in it.—**And they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.** White is the emblem of purity; and these robes are obtained through Christ's righteousness, and will be an everlasting comfort and adornment to the Christian. And what a privilege to be so familiarly associated with the Lord as to thus walk with him; but this walk with him, though begun in this life, will not be experienced in all its completeness until we walk with him in "the holy city, new Jerusalem."

5. **He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.** Men die, and hence their names have to be blotted out of human lists that are designed to contain only names of the living. But Christians who are born again, do not die the "second death;" and therefore, their names when once entered upon "the book of life" can never be blotted out. If it is intimated here that there is danger of the name being blotted out, it is because the language comes down to the human point of view; for some whose names men may have regarded as being written in the book of life, evidently have not overcome, but, so far as men could see, have failed. But from the standpoint of him who perfectly sees the end from the beginning, and the outcome of every movement, it must be otherwise. Can we reasonably imagine the Lord's "book of life" all interspersed with blots? the same name blotted, and then written again? Is he who is perfect in wisdom such a bookkeeper as this? No: a name once entered there by the unerring One will always remain. And although the owner of the name may wander off into paths of sin, yet the Good Shepherd will go after him until he finds him and brings him back; and he will confess him before his "Father, and before his angels," not only then and in this life, but especially on that day when the books will be opened, and another book, "which is the book of life."

6. **He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** This message closes with this usual emphatic call of attention to its contents, which has already been explained in chapter 2:7.

The existence of this church is traced by Dr. Gill down to the ninth century. The city was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Lydia. The famous Crœsus reigned here. At that time it was one of the most important cities of the East, but soon after rapidly declined in rank. In later times it suffered from successive earthquakes and the ravages of the Saracens and Turks. It is now a miserable village called Sart.

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF PHILADELPHIA. VS. 7–13.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9 Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

7. **And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.** Christ is preëminently the Holy One, and the True One. He is said to have "the key of David" because David's regal power in Israel was a type of his power in his kingdom. And this power he can exercise to such an extent that he can open the door of opportunity to his people,—he can give them access to the hearts of individuals, and to the community, and to the regions round about however far their influence and work may extend; and he will also open the door of heaven to them when their earthly work is

done. But he can also shut these doors when he chooses to do so,—he can leave the wicked to hardness of heart, and the community and the regions round about either outside of or hardened against the efforts of his people, and the door of heaven shut against sinners in the end.

8. **I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.** The Lord's rehearsal of his qualifications and power in the preceding verse might well assure this church that he was abundantly able to make good this promise of "an open door,"—a door of opportunity, as explained in the preceding verse. —**For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.** Perhaps this "strength" seemed little in comparison with the opportunity of the "open door;" but it was genuine, and therefore true to Christ's word and name.

9. **Behold, I will make** [give] **them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.** The second sentence in this passage explains and more fully completes the meaning of the first one. It tells in what way he will "make them of the synagogue of Satan" to become friendly to this church,—even by making these its inveterate enemies, who seem to be so closely associated together as to be called a "synagogue," so that they will come and worship [do obeisance] before its feet, and acknowledge that the peculiar love and especial favor of God rests upon it. And thus the bitter enmity of these enemies would be changed into respectful admission of the worthy character of this church and of its fidelity to Christ; and, doubtless many of them would become fellow saints in Christ.

10. **Because thou hast kept the word of my patience.** The gospel of Christ is the word of his patience, because of his own patient and persistent endurance in providing it; and it was the word of his patience to this church, because their patient endurance was especially tried and developed in their persistent and convincing testimony to the truth before their adversaries.—**I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.** The word translated "world" was sometimes used in a limited sense; as by the Greeks to designate their portion of the earth, as opposed to Barbarian lands, and later to designate the Roman Empire (Luke 2:1), and sometimes also

regions of smaller territorial extent. The promise of deliverance from this "hour of temptation" or trial need not be pressed so as to mean entire exemption from any of its effects. But their especial faithfulness would be rewarded by an especial providential care that would in a large measure exempt them from the trial, and that would give grace to deliver from any evil results from whatever of the trial might fall upon them. It is difficult to say just what trial is here meant. Was it the trial of persecution that was soon to be more widely extended, from which this church should be favored with especial deliverance? Or, was it the trial of corruption and apostasy that soon after began to fall upon the Christian Church? Or, was it the trial that came upon the regions in this part of the world through the rise of Mohammedan conquerors,—Saracens, Tartars, and Turks,—from whose conquests the city of Philadelphia seems to have been delivered until the year 1392? But this trial, in some way, was to be a test of the "world" as well as of the church. And whatever it might have been, the lesson to us is that especial faithfulness in time of prosperity will be rewarded by especial deliverance in time of trial.

11. **Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.** The Lord has just been speaking of opportunities that this church should enjoy, and has been making promises to them; and now he reminds them that he will quickly come again, and then it will be seen what use they make of these privileges for improvement and for aggressive usefulness. If they hold fast to the truth and improve these opportunities, the crown of life awaits them; but if they should relax their hold upon these things so that the ever vigilant enemy should get them away from them, he warns them that the crown may be lost.

12. **Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.** Paul speaks of James, Peter and John as pillars (Gal. 2:9). As the pillar is built into the earthly structure for support and ornamentation, so the stable, overcoming Christian is built by God into his spiritual temple as a support and ornament in it; and there through sustaining grace he will be kept and will remain.—**And I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.** The allusion seems to be to the custom of placing inscrip-

tions upon the pillars of pagan temples or other public buildings. Thus the Lord would place upon his faithful and victorious servants his Father's name (chapters 14:1 and 22:4), to show that they were adopted into his family and belonged to him; and "new Jerusalem" to show that their citizenship belonged in the heavenly city; and his own "new name" to show their new, near relation to him as their Redeemer.

13. And now this message closes with the usual call of attention to what has been said,—**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.**

Of the city of Philadelphia, Dr. Malcolm says in his Bible Dictionary: "Though we can only trace the regular history of Christianity in this place for about 800 years, it has never been extinguished. At present there are in it about 2000 Christians.... It is now called Allah Schyr, or the 'Fair City.'"

THE MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF LAODICEA. Vs. 14-22.

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

14. **And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness.** "He whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world" was the True One, and "the faithful and true witness" who brought the true knowledge of God unto men, and confirmed his testimony by

the soundness and truthfulness of his teachings, by the wonderful works he performed, and by the death he suffered. And then his knowledge and scrutiny are so profound and searching that the testimony he is about to give in relation to this church is faithful and true.—**The beginning of the creation of God.** The comprehensive word rendered "beginning" not only expresses priority of time, but first cause or occasion,—origin; it is also used to express the first place of power, or to designate a ruler, or his sovereignty or dominion. All these relations the Son of God, "by whom also he made the worlds," sustains to the universe. According to our conceptions as obtained from the Word of God, the first movement of Deity in relation to the universe was setting apart the Son of God to be its Creator and Sovereign Ruler; and, for the purpose of restoring man and with him all things involved in the fall, planning the way of redemption through the incarnation of the only begotten Son, who therefore should occupy the position of "the first born of every creature," and thus be "heir of all things." (See Col. 1:15 18, and Heb. 1:2). And when, for the purposes of redemption, "the Word was made flesh," the incarnate Son in the consummation of his earthly work retained all the prerogatives of the Divine Son, for he is the same person still, only divinity took on humanity for the purpose of working out redemption for fallen man.

15, 16. **I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.** The words rendered "hot" and "lukewarm" generally denote heat as applied to some fluid. The cold fluid—as water, or the hot—to a certain degree, is more agreeable to the system than the lukewarm. Then as the lukewarm condition is the most disagreeable one to the human system, so this church is in the most disagreeable condition to Christ; so much so that he says of it, "I will spew thee out of my mouth." Perhaps the admonitions of this message produced repentance so that this threat of rejection was long graciously suspended; for the existence of this church has been traced down to the seventh century.

17. **Because thou sayest I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.** Laodicea is said to have been a rich city, therefore this boast of wealth on the part of this church may have

been well grounded in fact. But it takes something more than wealth and outward prosperity to make a church that is pleasing to Christ. What are these in his estimation if there are wanting that inner spiritual life which comes from vital union with him, and that loyal observance of all things whatsoever he has commanded? To a church in such a condition, Christ can say as he said to this church,—**And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.** Thus it is indicated that there was lacking all the essentials of true riches and true enjoyment.

18. **I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.** Although God has bountifully provided redemption and freely offers it to all, yet man has his part to perform. It is essential that he should signify his acceptance of the gift, and conform to such conditions of heart and life as Christ requires in order that he may consistently impart to him "the riches of his grace," "the riches of his glory," "the peace of God," and all other blessings of whatever name that are true riches to the devout believer.—**And white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.** Very likely these wealthy Christians outwardly were richly clothed, but this is poor covering to him "who hath eyes like unto a flame of fire." In chapter 19:8, it is said of the bride the Lamb's wife, "To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." And "the righteousness of saints" is the imputed righteousness of Christ, accompanied on their part by on effort to maintain a life and character in harmony therewith. —**And anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.** Temporal prosperity in churches may be very deceiving, and it seems these Laodicean Christians had been blinded by it; hence the need of this counsel.

19. **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten.** The Lord does not abandon them in their imagined prosperity, but tries to show them its shallowness by following them with such rebukes and chastisements, such trials as will bring them to see their poverty of spiritual graces and of true Christian character. And in order that they might return to a right condition of Christian life, and thus avoid the trials and sorrows of his rebukes and chastisements, as well as the ultimate consequence of their lukewarm and unspir-

itual condition, he gives them the admonition,—**Be zealous therefore, and repent.**

20. **Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.** The Lord now addresses them individually. While in the enjoyment of their temporal blessings, their hearts have been closed to the familiar visits and feasts that he loves to enjoy with his people. And now he stands and knocks and pleads that they may open the door of their hearts so that he may enter and sup with them,—even of their poor fare; while in turn they may sup with him,—even of the riches of his provisions of grace and glory.

21. **To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.** This passage, together with other similar ones, plainly indicates that as their victorious Lord is associated with his Father in his throne, so the victorious saints will be associated with him as their Redeemer "in the throne of his glory," and be partakers with him in his regal honors and in his judicial authority. The Apostle says, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (2 Tim. 2:12). And again, "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world" (1 Cor. 6:2)? And to the Twelve Christ promised that they should "sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:30).

32. This epistle closes with the solemn admonition given to each of the other six churches,—**He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.** It is all-important that the voice of the Spirit, who also speaks through the words of the Lord in these messages, should be heard and heeded.

Dr. Gill, in his Commentary, traces the Church of Laodicea down to the seventh century. But the place where the city stood is now an extensive ruin.

THE HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE MESSAGES TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES.

According to the views of some writers on this book, the messages to the seven churches prophetically describe seven successive periods in the history of the Christian Church. Nothing has been said about this view in our exposition of these messages, but this view has been a source of frequent interest and helpfulness in the mind of the writer in his study and research on this book; for

while all is not entirely clear, yet these messages contain expressions that, in a remarkable manner, seem to portray things and events that pertain to the respective periods to which they are said to relate. Therefore, before leaving this subject, we deem it worth while to give a brief sketch of the historical view of these messages to the seven churches. And this should not affect anything that has already been said, but only supplement it; for, as we understand it, it is not uncommon for Scripture prophecies to relate to things near at hand while they also relate to things in the more remote future.

The Ephesian church-period is regarded as representing the primitive Church in its active labor, and patience, and first love, and in its dislike of evil deeds and erroneous doctrines as appears from its hatred of the "deeds of the Nicolaitans;" who later on—in the Pergamon church-period—seem to become a corrupt party within the church. But in the latter part of this period, the Church leaves her first love, and with this loss, undoubtedly, her first watchfulness and zeal abate; hence the exhortation, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works." This period may be regarded as embracing the first century or more of the Church's existence. But we need not draw a definite boundary line between these periods so as to make one end just where the next begins, but rather necessarily they seem to overlap each other so as to be partially contemporary with each other. Taking this view, this and the Smyrnan church-period may be largely contemporaneous.

The Smyrnan church-period, like the Ephesian, is one of commendable activity. But the Church is poor in this world's goods, though rich in another sense; it is also troubled with false professors, who are said to be "the synagogue of Satan," but whether they were in the Church or out of it does not appear. But the most distinguishing marks or characteristics of this church-period are the sufferings and trials to which believers were subjected by Satan. The "tribulation ten days" is regarded as representing the ten different persecutions the Church suffered under the pagan Roman emperors. Hence the time embraced within this period must be regarded as beginning with the first persecution under the Emperor Nero and extending most probably to the time of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, in the first part of the fourth century.

Under the Pergamon church-period the works continue and the name of Christ is held fast, and there are some martyrs as represented by the martyred Antipas. This Church was located "where Satan dwelleth," and the chief seats of influence in the Church of this period were the courts of the Roman emperors at Constantinople and the city of Rome, of either of which it might be said, "Where Satan dwelleth." The doctrines of Balaam and the Nicolaitans—so hated by the Lord—which some consider as being of the same general character, may be regarded as representing the Jewish and pagan doctrines, rites, and ceremonies that were introduced into the Church and obscured the undenied name and faith of Christ, and through which heirarchical influence and power were enabled to grow and thrive. The period of the Pergamon church-state may be regarded as beginning with the recognition of the Christian Religion by the Roman emperors as the State Religion of the Empire, and extending down through several centuries from that time.

The Lord finds "works, and charity, and service, and faith," and "patience" to commend in the Church of Thyatira. But he severely censures the corrupt party in the Church, which is under the influence of the woman Jezebel, who may be regarded as representing the Papacy, which in this period attained its full growth; and under the teachings of which, the Lord's servants were seduced "to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols." And under the Lord's threatened punishment this Jezebel is undoubtedly cast out of his Church, so that as he says, "All the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts." And now, on the other hand, during this time, various reformed sects sprung up to which the Lord's words of commendation were especially applicable; and then the Reformation came under this period; and to the Reformers the Lord's words were also especially applicable when he says, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star." And all these things were eventually most strikingly accomplished through the Reformation, at which time the morning star of a brighter day arose that should succeed the dark night of the Middle Ages, over which this Thyatiran church-period seems to extend.

The Sardian church-period is chiefly one of dead formalism; but with "a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." For although the reformed churches had largely lost their spirituality and relapsed into formalism, yet there were some even in these churches, and more especially there were those among the active pious dissenting sects, of whom the Lord might say, "And they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." But here there is no charge of false doctrines as under the two preceding periods, therefore we may conclude that those who entertained these false doctrines are now regarded as being outside the true Christian Church. Although the morning star seemed to arise so brightly at the Reformation, yet there was still to come the dark period of dead formalism that succeeded the rapidly waning fervor of that event, before the auspicious rising day of Modern Missions under the Philadelphian church-period was reached. And this time may be regarded as the Sardian church-period.

Under the Philadelphian church-period we find no words of censure; but before this Church there should be "an open door;" and from "a little strength," and faithfulness to the "word" and "name" of Christ, there should be aggressiveness, and enlargement, and honor. Under modern missions we see all this being fulfilled; hence, the Philadelphian church-period may be regarded as the Modern Missionary Period.

The Laodicean church-period presents a great contrast to the preceding one. Instead of a loving faithful church we have now a lukewarm, wealthy, and self-satisfied one. Perhaps when the missionary work of the Church is well along towards being accomplished through the gospel having been preached to all nations, Christian zeal and Christian love will begin to decline; and under the peace and prosperity that we have reason to believe will be enjoyed under the Philadelphian church-period, in all probability the Church will become wealthy as well as universally extended. And then in our progress through this book, we shall see indications of religious decline, and of the prevalence of erroneous religious beliefs, and also of troublous times, towards the end of the Present Dispensation; and perhaps in the judgments through which antichristian power is destroyed just before its close, the Lord will execute his threat, "I will spew thee out of my mouth," by casting out of his Church whatever is nauseous or offensive to him, in con-

nection with these judgments; and thus he will purify and unify his Church and prepare her as a bride ready "for the marriage of the Lamb." (See chapter 19:7, 8). And possibly, "him that overcometh" will be among those who occupy the thrones spoken of in chapter 20:4, which, according to the view presented here, in point of time, will now not be very far distant.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ENTHRONED ONE, THE ELDERS, AND THE LAMPS OF FIRE. Vs. 1–5.

1 After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.

3 And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

4 And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices: and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

1. **After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.** The point of view and the objects seen thus far in this book have been on earth, but the point of view and the principal objects seen in this vision are represented as being in heaven. But it should be constantly borne in mind that the "heaven" described in this chapter and the next is the figurative heaven of the visions of this book until we come to the new heaven in the latter part of it, and is designed not to represent the heavenly department of the one indivisible kingdom of God but the earthly

department of it,—that department which is sometimes called the Christian Church but more properly the kingdom of God on earth. Therefore such expressions as "heaven," "in heaven," "of heaven," etc., as used in this book, should generally be regarded as locating the scenes or events under consideration in the kingdom of God on earth rather than in heaven as this word is commonly understood; and frequently also as locating them in this kingdom in distinction from the kingdoms of this world that stand opposed to it. The vision introduced here brings into view persons and things that bear a close relation to each other in both departments of the one heavenly kingdom; and also such as are largely interested in that which is to follow in the book, to which it may be regarded as an introduction. Thus far the contents of this book relate largely to things that have already taken place, but now they are to show "things which must be hereafter,"—things that were known only to the omnicient One in heaven; and therefore John is bid "Come up hither" that he may receive the heavenly communications from their source.

2. **And immediately I was in the Spirit.** Such a large measure of the Holy Spirit's influence fell upon him that in spirit he responded to the call of the voice, "Come up hither;" and his spiritual vision was so quickened that he could see things imperceptible to the material eye.—**And, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne.** The throne and its Occupant have the first place among the persons and objects interested in the revelation about to be made, and are designed to represent the seat of power among the objects concerned; and although immaterial in substance, they are represented as having material form in order to meet the requirements of the vision, and to come within the material perception of those for whose instruction it was designed. The Occupant of the throne doubtless is the Father, the first person of the Trinity; the Holy Spirit, designated as "the seven Spirits of God," and the Son, as "a Lamb," enter into the vision in their appropriate places further on.

3. **And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone.** Was so "to look upon;" was so in appearance to mortal vision. To eyes not sufficiently enlightened to discern a purely spiritual being, there must of necessity be some form; therefore, the Form upon the throne is represented as composed of these

precious stones,—the first and the last on the Jewish highpriest's breastplate.—**And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.** The rainbow is a reminder of the continued existence of "the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." The position of this bow around the throne instead of in the cloud, gives to the covenant a vastly more important and far reaching meaning. In the cloud, it is a token of the promise that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh;" around the throne, it is a token that a promise of mercy has come forth from the throne, on account of which the flood of universal wrath shall never come.

4. **And round about the throne were four and twenty seats** [thrones]: **and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting.** The throne of God occupied the central position, and encircling it were these twenty-four seats or thrones occupied by the elders. These elders bring to mind the twelve Patriarchs of the Jewish Dispensation, and the twelve Apostles of Christ of the Christian Dispensation; and, doubtless, are representative of all the redeemed people of God in both dispensations, and also, most likely, in all time. And thus the saints are brought into this introductory vision as an interested party in that which is about to take place.—**Clothed in white raiment.** "White raiment," as we have already observed in chapter 3:18, represents the righteousness of saints through Christ. And in chapter 7:14, it is said of the raiment of the redeemed, "And have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—**And they had on their heads crowns of gold.** They not only were honored with a royal position round the throne, but were also invested with the acknowledged insignia of regal dignity and power.

5. **And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices.** In this book, "lightnings and thunderings" are generally symbols of displeasure and wrathful commotions. But here they call to mind similar awe-inspiring exhibitions that accompanied the proclamation of the law from Mount Sinai, which contained both provisions of mercy and threatenings of wrath. These symbols not only represent the majesty of the throne, but their having a place in this vision in its relation to what follows, plainly intimates that God acts and speaks in reference to the transactions about to take place, and that he will continue to do so during the progress of the

same.—**And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.** These "seven lamps" correspond with the sēven lights of the seven-branched candlestick of the Jewish Tabernacle that were always kept burning. And as we have already seen, "The seven Spirits which are before his throne," and, "The seven Spirits of God," are expressions used in this book to designate the Holy Spirit (chapters 1:4 and 3:1).

THE CRYSTAL SEA AND THE FOUR LIVING CREATURES. VS. 6–8.

6 And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

7 And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

8 [1st part]. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within.

6. **And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal.** This sea reminds us of the "molten sea" described in 2 Chron. 4:2–6, which was placed in the court before the Temple "for the priests to wash in;" and also of the "laver" described in Ex. 30:17–21, which was placed in the court of the Tabernacle, in which the priests should wash when they went into the Tabernacle, "that they die not." It was necessary that these holy places should be pure, and in order to maintain this purity all who approach them must also be pure. And thus it must be in relation to the heavenly throne. The laver was made of the brazen "lookingglasses of the women" (Ex. 38:8), which had been used to detect physical defects and to reflect physical beauty; but this sea is represented as made of "glass like unto crystal," which figuratively by its transparent and reflective properties, would detect the approach of any moral defects and enhance the beauties of moral perfections.—

And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts [living creatures] **full of eyes before and behind.** From the parts of this vision already considered, we have seen that its imagery is largely taken from the Jewish Tabernacle and its furniture; but sacrificial offerings being now abolished, until we come to where the exercise of persecuting power is represented by "the altar," the parts pertaining to them are left out and appear in this vision further on only in the person of the "Lamb as it had been slain," who, by the offering of himself, "perfected forever them

that are sanctified." If we combine Isaiah's vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple," and of the "seraphim" also, similar if not identical with these living creatures (Is. 6:1–4), with the Tabernacle and its appurtenances, considering the sacrificial parts as all either abolished or represented by the Lamb and the altar of persecution, as already intimated above, we have the prototypes of a large portion of the imagery of this vision, so much so that the parts of one may be largely considered as counterparts of the other. In harmony with Isaiah's vision, the throne and its Occupant in this vision may be conceived as filling the space just over the Temple, or its prototype the Tabernacle—if we choose to take that as our prototype. Then before the Tabernacle there was a court; and in this vision, round the throne there is an encircling space, differing in shape, but seemingly answering the same general purposes. And over this heavenly court, encircling the throne, is the "rainbow;" and its space contains the "crystal sea;" and upon it are the "seats" of the "four and twenty elders," encircling the throne; and in an inner circle, between this one and the throne, are placed the "four beasts" or more properly the four living creatures; and before the throne in closest proximity to it, are the "seven lamps of fire burning, . . . which are the seven Spirits of God;" and here also, as we shall see further on, stands the "Lamb." These are the principal objects that enter into the vision occupying the space in it represented by the Jewish Tabernacle and its court; further on in this vision we have the great company of angels surrounding this space and these objects in a still wider circle, somewhat as the hosts of Israel surrounded the Tabernacle in the wilderness, as described in Numbers 2. Now combining Isaiah's vision with the Tabernacle and its appurtenances, and we have in those the prototypes of all these objects except the rainbow and the elders including their seats. And the prototype of the rainbow appeared in the covenant with Noah made prior to the erection of the tabernacle, and that of the elders was not completed until the beginning of the Gospel Dispensation.

And now returning to the consideration of the four living creatures, the question arises, What do they represent? Paul says, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It was seriously affected by the fall; but, in earnest expecta-

tion it "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Its final deliverance from the "curse" will take place simultaneously with the final deliverance and glorification of the sons of God. Therefore the physical creation is largely interested in the transactions ushered in by this vision, and hence is represented by these four living creatures. Their being "full of eyes before and behind;" represents creation as being endowed with perception; so that in whatever direction it looks, it sees and recognizes the wisdom and perfection of its Creator.

7. **And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.** The "lion" may be regarded as the representative of the wild beasts; the "calf," as that of the domestic animals; the "eagle," as that of the fowls; and the "face as a man" on the third beast, as representing man as a part of the material creation, which he truly is. In his Commentary on this passage, Dr. J. A. Smith quotes an ancient Jewish saying to this effect: "There are four which take the first place in this world: man among the creatures, the eagle among birds, the ox among cattle, and the lion among wild beasts." Therefore as these four classes include the most important parts of the physical creation endowed with the capacity of experiencing sensations of pleasure or pain, accordingly as they are affected by conditions of good or evil, they are selected as representatives of the whole. Dr. Gill, in his Commentary on this passage, refers to the four standards in the camp of Israel in the wilderness placed on the four sides of the Tabernacle, and then states that, "The Jewish writers say, that on Judah's standard was the figure of a lion; on Ephraim's, the figure of an ox; on Reuben's, the figure of a man; and on Dan's, the figure of an eagle." And thus, doubtless, in the order of arrangements around the Tabernacle, as given in the second chapter of Numbers, are found the prototypes of these forms. And they also appear in Ezekiel's vision of four somewhat similar living creatures (Ez. 1:10).

8. [1st part]. **And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him.** Most likely all the difference in the form of the bodies of these four living creatures was in their heads; hence, the parts to which the wings were attached would be alike in each. If these wings were for the same uses as those of each of Isaiah's six-winged seraphim, then, with "twain he covered his face, and with

twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." Thus two of the wings would be extended upward and forward over the face, and two downward over the feet, and two in a lateral direction between the other two pairs. And their bodies being thus vailed as it were, is perhaps expressive of the reverential attitude of creation in the presence of its Maker; and also of its mysteries when looked upon and considered by man.—**And they were full of eyes within.** The Revised Version detaches the phrase "about him" from the preceding clause and attaches it to this one, which makes it read, "Are full of eyes round about and within." Thus these wings do not interfere with their being full of eyes as stated in verse 6; for they were full of eyes around without their wings and within or under them, as well as on other parts of their bodies.

PRAISE TO THE CREATOR. Vs. 8-11.

8 [2nd part]. And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

8. [2d part]. **And they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.** The word "holy" means wholeness, perfection, wanting nothing; therefore this devout, never-ceasing ascription of praise is expressive of the perpetual harmonious voice of creation, proclaiming the perfection, the power, and the eternal existence of the Creator.

9-11. **And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.** In the vision of Isaiah already referred to, it is said of the seraphim, "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." If this adoration and praise to the ever-living Creator is

also conducted responsively, as appears to be the case, then these reverential acts of the elders together with their words of praise, seem to be a chorus following each responsive round of the four living creatures. And thus the redeemed are represented as responding to the voice of creation in adoring the Creator. But thus far in these ascriptions of praise, there are no strains of redemption; we must wait for them until the Lamb appears in the vision.

CHAPTER V.

The Sealed Book. Vs. 1–5.

1 And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

1. **And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.** According to the form of books at that time, this book would be in the form of a roll; and it was so full of important matter that it is represented as written on both sides. The seals divided it into seven parts; so that when the first seal was broken it would unroll to the second one, and when the second was broken it would unroll to the third, and so on to the end. This book, as we shall see when we come to the opening of its seals, contained in prophecy the leading characteristics and events of the religious history of the world during the Present Dispensation.

2. **And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?** The voice of this mighty angel sounds out through all creation, so that the question may reach all, and the result be noticed by all.

3. **And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.** For awhile there is silence, there comes no response to the angel's momentous question from any being in all the universe.

4. **And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.** John, noticing the interest centered in the book, and having his own feelings wrought up to the highest point of interest and expectation, is so overcome by the seeming failure to find any being who could respond to the angel's proclamation that he is moved so that he "wept much."

5. **And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.** The elders as the representatives of the Lamb's redeemed ones knew something of the character and attainments of "the Lion of the tribe of Juda" as the Redeemer; hence, one of them could knowingly speak these comforting words to his sorrowing brother. In his human lineage, Christ sprung from the royal family of the tribe of Juda, and as the most important personage in all that royal line he is appropriately called "the Lion of the tribe of Juda;" but as the Divine Creator he is the Root whence David sprung. And although he was the "only begotten Son of God," "by whom also he made the worlds," yet "he took on him the seed of Abraham," and became partaker of "flesh and blood" with the children which God gave him, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;" and thus bring "many sons unto glory." (See Heb. 2:9–18). Thus as the once incarnate but now glorified and ever-living Redeemer and King, who perfectly knows all that pertains to the future progress of his kingdom, he "hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."

THE LAMB BEFORE THE THRONE. V. 6.

6 And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.

6. **And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain.** The description given by the elder in the preceding verse, and also the Lamb's acts soon to appear in this vision of taking "the book out of the right hand of him that sat on the throne" and of opening "the seals thereof," would indicate a higher order of being than a mere lamb with the ordinary mark of sacrificial death. And therefore, most likely, John recognizes in this Lamb "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world;" and very probably his appearing "as it had been slain" was due to the sacrificial marks on his body received at his crucifiction, as seen by John and his fellow disciples after his resurrection.—**Having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.** "Horns" are symbols of power, often if not usually of kingly power; and "seven horns" represent perfect power, and "seven eyes" perfect discernment. In this book, as we have already observed, the expressions, "The seven Spirits which are before his throne," and, "The seven Spirits of God," are used to designate the Holy Spirit. (See chapters 1:4, 3:1 and 4:5.) But the Lamb need not be regarded as "having" the Holy Spirit in the sense of ownership and absolute control; but rather, in the sense of coöperation with him in his work on the earth as Redeemer and King. When the redeeming work of the Son was finished, he returned to the Father; and now, while these occupy the Court of Heaven, the Holy Spirit is "sent forth into all the earth," and is now the Divine Representative on earth, possessed of the perfect power and perception indicated in the expressions used to designate him; and therefore he is fully prepared to maintain the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom on earth; and, speaking after the manner of men, to observe the doings on earth and, quicker than the lightning speed of telegraphic dispatches to the courts of earth, report them to the Court of Heaven. And thus the Lamb, in addition to his fitness for the work by reason of his own personal character and attainments, is represented as having the power and the means of information necessary to qualify him "to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof;" and thus to unfold the future history of his kingdom in its relation to the systems of religion and the kingdoms of earth, and we may also add in its relation to the universe.

THE NEW SONG. Vs. 7–10.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.

9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

7, 8. **And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne. And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials** [bowls] **full of odours, which are the prayers of saints.** "Harps" are instruments of praise. And the "golden vials full of odours" remind one of the incense offered in the Jewish sanctuary service; and very probably the prayers of the saints also include such service as they would not fail to render in connection with their prayers, all of which would be "a sweet savour unto the Lord." Some writers do not regard the participle "having" as referring to both the four beasts and the elders, but limit it to the latter. And this construction would also limit the "new song" to the elders, to whom as the representatives of redemption these parts of the worship would seem to be the more appropriate. But the four beasts certainly participate in the previous act of worship when they with the elders "fall down before the Lamb," and at the end of this whole round of worship they add their "Amen." But whether this worship of the Lamb is limited as above indicated or not, the facts should not be overlooked that creation is interested in redemption, as Paul reasons in the eighth chapter of Romans; and that the saints while in the body are a part of the material creation, and therefore so far are appropriately represented by these four living creatures. And then to these representative beings thus near the throne, the creative and redemptive work of the Lamb, in these and other respects, may seem to be more closely linked together than now appears to our limited view.

9. **And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and**

people, and nation. In the preceding chapter we had the song of creation, which, by way of contrast, may be called the old song. But now upon the appearance of the Lamb "in the midst of the throne," the wonderful work of redemption through his blood, and his consequent fitness "to take the book, and to open the seals thereof," come into view; and these representative beings lift up their voices in the exultant strains of this "new song" of praise to their Redeemer.

10. **And hast made us unto our God kings and priests.** A more correct rendering would be, a kingdom and priests. In this song these representative beings seem to speak for those whom they represent; for this kingdom is formed by the Lamb of citizen-subjects redeemed by his own "blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." And in this redemption now no ritualistic priesthood as a means of communication appears between them and their Redeemer, but each one directly approaches him for himself; for that priesthood was abolished when the Lamb was slain.—**And we shall reign on the earth.** In its beginnings the redeemed subjects of this ever-advancing kingdom are taken from the tribes and nations of the earth amid hostile powers and influences over which they are continually triumphing; and in the progress of the kingdom the time was coming when Christian influences would exert a predominating power in the affairs of earth, and "The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom." And when the glorious consummation is reached as represented to John in the first verses of chapter 21, its redeemed and glorified subjects will dwell in the "new Jerusalem" upon the "new earth."

THE ANGELIC RESPONSE. VS. 11, 12.

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

11. **And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands.** Although redemption through the Lamb slain more directly concerns mankind, yet it is a theme that attracts the attention and

awakens the interest of the innumerable company of the angelic host; who appear "round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders" in an outer circle and respond to the song of the representatives of earth.

12. **Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.** While the various persons and objects that enter into this vision seem to have been withheld from John's view until the proper point in the vision was reached, these heavenly intelligences, whose perceptions were of a vastly higher order than his, most likely had an intelligent conception of all its parts and of their mutual relations; and therefore, they knew that the Lamb was the Divine Son by whom the Father who sat on the throne had "made the worlds;" and that as Creator he had shared with him that sat on the throne in the "holy, holy, holy" of creation as represented by the four living creatures in the preceding chapter; to which the twenty-four elders had responded, "Saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Thus the Lamb, as the Son in his relation to creation, has already been declared worthy "to receive glory and honour and power;" but now, in his relation to redemption as "the Lamb that was slain," he is declared worthy of immeasurable additions to the "glory and honour and power" which he has already received through his work in creation. For by the sacrificial offering of himself his "power" and authority are greatly strengthened and enlarged; his "riches" increased by the fruits of redemption; his "wisdom" shown in forming and executing wonderful plans in justice and mercy; his "strength" such as could overcome Satan and every foe; and his "honour, and glory, and blessing"—or praise, greatly advanced by the increased estimation in which he is held by all intelligent beings; and also by a greatly increased number of loving subjects rescued from the power of the enemy.

THE CHORUS OF EVERY CREATURE. Vs. 13, 14.

13. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be uuto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

14. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth forever and ever.

13. **And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.** We come now to the last one of the various parts into which these songs of creation and redemption are divided. In this chorus every creature in the universe is represented as joining in an ascription of praise to both Creator and Redeemer, and thus they render unto the Lamb divine honors equally with "him that sitteth upon the throne." This ascription almost exactly reproduces the ascription in the response of the elders to the praise of creation; and also, though in fewer particulars, the one in the response of the angels to the new song. Thus the praise already rendered to the Creator and to the Redeemer, is re-echoed by every creature from every part of the universe.

14. **And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.** Thus creation in its representatives, is in harmony and sympathy with all that has been said and done in honor of both Creator and Redeemer, and would confirm and establish it. And the elders express their assent and approval by repeating their acts of adoration and worship before "him that liveth for ever and ever."

The conception of this chorus is not fully realized now, because sin has entered into the world, and a part of the creatures represented are in rebellion; but doubtless it looks forward to the time when the curse of sin will be removed, and the purposes of God in redemption fully wrought out. Then the promise will be fulfilled, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10, 11). And then the grand conception of the imagery of this sublime chorus will be fully realized; and these attributions of "blessing, and honour, and glory, and power," in their appropriate place, be joyfully and happily continued "unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FIRST SEAL. Vs. 1, 2.

1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.

2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering and to conquer.

1. **And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.** From the introductory and preparatory part of the vision we pass now to the prophetic part. Creation and redemption are intermingled, and in some respects inseparable; the religious condition of men affects creation; hence, the four living creatures as representatives of creation are interested in it; and upon the opening of each of the first four seals which, as interpreted below, relate to the religious condition of the earth, each one of them respectively says, "Come and see."

2. **And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him.** This horseman represents the Christian religion with Christ as its leader. The white horse is the emblem of purity, the bow and the crown that of conquest and dominion.—**And he went forth conquering, and to conquer.** As each individual in the human family comes upon the scene of human action with a heart naturally alienated from God, this conquering work has to be continually and successively exercised in subduing individual hearts in Christian lands, as well as in the work of subduing other lands to the peaceable sway of the kingdom of Christ.

THE SECOND SEAL. Vs. 3, 4.

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.

4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

3, 4. **And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red.** Upon the opening of each of the first four seals, there appears a horse going out, and upon him a rider. In these principal respects the four are alike; the difference between them being in what may be called the incidents of color, equipments, and what is said of

them or to them. Therefore, whatever may be represented by one, it is reasonably certain that something similar must be represented by the other. If the first horseman represents the Christian religion, consistency requires that each of the other three horsemen should likewise represent some system of religion. Now, while there are many varying forms of religion in the world, perhaps all may be traced to four root systems: The Christian, the Mohammedan, the Apostate Christian, and the Pagan. Therefore, according to this view, and judging from the description given of him, the horseman of this seal represents the Mohammedan religion. The red or flame-colored horse is the symbol of devastation and war.—**And power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth.** This religion has been decidedly one of war; having been propagated by the sword according to the teaching of Mohammed himself, who promised Paradise to those of his followers who should be killed in his service. And Abubeker, the caliph who succeeded him, taught that: "Fighting for religion is an act of obedience to God.—**And that they should kill one another.** This has been a religion of much internal dissension, in which many factions have arisen, appealing in reality to no other decision than that of the sword.—**And there was given unto him a great sword.** This sword doubtless represents the civil power with which this religion was combined; for, at first, it was propagated and defended principally by the power of the Saracens; and subsequently, when this declined and became inadequate to the task, by that of the Turks.

THE THIRD SEAL. VS. 5, 6.

5 And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

5. **And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse.** The horseman of this seal represents Apostate Christianity, of which the Church of Rome may be regarded as the leading body though not the only one. This body was once a true Christian Church; but when it became a corrupt and worldly institution, we have reason to believe God rejected it as he had Israel before under their

apostasy, and transferred his kingdom to people bringing forth the fruits thereof. The black horse is the emblem of error and darkness.—**And he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.** Balances in their various forms are one of the principal measures of value in the commercial world; and here represent a sort of commercial religion, in which men have placed such value on Divine Truth and on the ordinances and duties of religion as pleased themselves; and have instituted a mediatorial priesthood through whom alone the people are taught to believe they have access to God; and instead of the Bible doctrine of salvation by grace, have taught that a saving efficacy is attached to the ordinances and services of the Church.

6. **And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny.** A penny represented the usual day's wages of a man, and a measure of wheat his usual daily allowance for food; therefore he would have nothing left for other wants, or for the support of a family; and if he invested in barley as the cheaper food, there would still be an insufficient amount left for the supply of these other wants. Thus it appears that these expressions show that there are some remnants of saving truth in this religion, but they are so scarce as to require famine prices to obtain them.—**And see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.** Perhaps we can better perceive the meaning of this difficult passage by the aid of another similar but more clear one in chapter 9:4, which seems to relate to this same form of religion after it had acquired civil power. Any long continued scarcity of the products mentioned in this verse, would most likely be a result of some harm that had befallen the plants and trees that produced them. The wheat and barley plants produce one crop only and then perish, and therefore may be considered as representative of the lives of men as individuals; but the olive tree, which was the principal source of supply for oil, and the vine, are perennials, and produce many successive crops of fruit, and therefore may be regarded as representative of national life, which continues although many generations of men live and pass away.

Now in the passage referred to above, "grass," "green thing," and "tree"—certainly two of which are perennials —are regarded as representing national life, which is also in har-

mony with a like interpretation of "trees" and "green grass" in chapter 8:7. Now if this is the correct view, then the harmful work of this horseman, like that of the locusts in chapter 9:4, is not to be exerted upon national life, but rather it is to be expended upon men as individuals. Hence the significance of the "voice in the midst of the four beasts," whose sphere as representatives of creation would more properly include national life than that of their near companions the elders as representatives of redemption. But the scarcity of food as represented by the high price of the wheat and barley may be regarded as representing a scarcity of robust Christian people. And such ones as did obtain some of the bread of life through genuine faith in Christ, would be starved and dwarfed under such a condition of things. And the scarcity of well developed Christian people would tend to continue the famine-producing work of this horseman.

But notwithstanding this spiritual famine, may we not believe that many of the people, though spiritually starved by their religious guides and teachers, yet may obtain a sufficient amount of the bread of life to impart and sustain that saving spiritual life that comes from Christ, who is himself the bread of life? The Lord's call to his people to come out of Babylon before her fall (chapter 18:4), plainly implies that such may be the case. And then, also, we have good reason to believe that the terrible denunciations and judgments repeatedly pronounced against Apostate Christainity in subsequent parts of this book, will fall by far most heavily upon its leaders and teachers.

THE FOURTH SEAL. Vs. 7, 8.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.

8 And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

7, 8. **And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse.** The horseman of this seal represents Paganism, of which Buddhism may be regarded as the principal system, inasmuch as its worshipers are said to number more than one third of the human race; and although there are other important ones, yet for brevity

we will take this as the representative one. The pale horse may represent its wan and morbid teaching; such as that respecting created divinities—as Gaudama, the last one—who appear at long intervals of time and obtain deification and then pass into Nicban or annihilation; or rather, into a state of unconscious repose, which is regarded as the supreme good, and to which all aspire. Also such as that relating to the transmigration of souls from one body to another, rising and falling in the scale of existence and happiness, not according to the decisions of an intelligent and just judge, but according to the degree of merit at each birth as decided by immutable fate. There is no idea of the remission of sins in any way; the only hope is to balance them by merit, which is obtained by avoiding sins and performing virtues. But in transmigration from one body to another, identity is virtually lost, and merit is so easily obtained that sin is reduced to a trifle.*—

And his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. No wonder that the rider on this horse is called Death, for surely if any where on the earth Death reigns wherever Paganism is found; and Hell follows with him to gather in the fruits of his work, thus showing that his work was bringing eternal death to men as well as natural death.—**And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth.** This definite mathematical area perhaps represents the exclusiveness of Paganism; one of its chief seats being South Eastern Asia, the nations of which, until recently, have had but little intercourse with those of Christendom. Among people where the life of an animal or of an insect is sometimes regarded as more sacred than that of a fellow man, and where men are unrestrained by a sense of just future retribution, human life, no doubt, would be lightly regarded. In pagan lands left to themselves without any of the restraints of Christian influence, what might we expect but for these representative forms, Death and Hell,—**to kill with the sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.** These particulars represent the results of the degraded and cruel tendencies and the terrible evils of Paganism. In its isolated condition war, famine, and pestilence are its inevitable fruits.

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*See Malcom's Travels in South Eastern Asia. pp. 180-214.

THE FIFTH SEAL. VS. 9-11.

9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

9. **And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held.** In the vision of heaven as described by John in chapters 4 and 5, which so closely resemble the model of the Jewish Tabernacle, there was no altar mentioned; the only indications of sacrifice were the sacrificial marks upon the Lamb. But now and also in places further on in this book an altar appears. The question arises, What does this altar represent? It appears to be the altar on which the bodies "of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," had been offered; and if so, this altar was the altar of persecution. Under the four preceding seals, we have had represented to us the four root systems of religion that should exist on the earth. In the nature of things there would be a conflict between the true system and the false ones. The fifth seal represents the effect of this conflict in respect to the power of these false religions over the true one. That power could slay men "for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

10. **And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?** Their cry identifies their slayers as "them that dwell on the earth,"—men, worldly men. It also shows that they commit the wrongs done them into the hands of the Lord as the avenger of their blood.

11. **And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.** By the white robes they are represented as provided for and indicated as righteous. But opposition and persecution were not yet ended. Yet the power of these false

religions over the true one is limited to this life; it does not reach into the future life; it cannot interfere with the "white robes" given to these martyrs, nor with their future rest. This "little season" seems to end when, at the first resurrection as described in chapter 20:4, these martyrs are doubtless among those who are raised up as witnesses against and judges upon the beast, with whom the persecuting powers of earth will be destroyed.

THE SIXTH SEAL. VS. 12–17.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood;

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.

15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains;

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

12, 13. **And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake.** The preceding seal represents the power of the false religions over the true one, but this seal represents the power of the true religion over the false ones. But the true religion has on its side the infinite power of the Lord Jesus Christ, and before his power all opposing power shall eventually be utterly overthrown. And the overthrow of that power as represented by the hostile organizations of the earth, seems to take place under this seal; and because calling into exercise the crowning retributive judgments of God, it is represented by selections from the most impressive and intense imagery found in the prophetic utterances of the Bible. In Scriptural metaphor an earthquake represents some great convulsion in which, generally if not always, the fate of nations is involved. When Jonathan and his armor-bearer, single handed, showed themselves to the host of the Philistines at Mickmash, "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people: the garrison, and the spoilers, they also trembled, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling" (1 Sam. 14:15). And Isaiah, lamenting the judgment upon Jerusalem that should come suddenly through the multitude

of all the nations that should fight against her, says, "Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire" (Is. 29:6). And the prophet Ezekiel says, "And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord God, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel . . . And the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground" (Ez. 38:18–20).

And the Lord himself in his talk with his disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem, speaks of earthquakes in connection with nation rising against nation and kingdom against kingdom. It is significant that in two other places in this book where—as we understand it—we approach the end of the Present Dispensation, an earthquake is mentioned in each: namely, under the seventh trumpet (chapter 11:19), and under the seventh vial (chapter 16:18). And although the particular portents in this passage are mostly different from the ones in those passages, yet their general import seems to be so similar and their position in these series of visions such that in all probability they represent partially if not wholly synchronous events. And such a view gives to this impressive portentous imagery a significance and reality that far transcends its application to any earlier, and less decisive and world-wide events.—

And the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. So violent is this earthquake that it not only shakes the earth, but its effects reach the visible heavens also; and thus, as in the case of the seventh vial poured out into the air, perhaps there is indicated here among other things the universal extent of the judgments it portends. After speaking of the pouring out of the Spirit upon all flesh, the prophet Joel presents the other side of the subject in portentous imagery like this: "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come" (Joel 2:31). And in chapter 3:15 of the same prophecy, speaking of the day of the Lord in

the valley of decision, when he shall judge the heathen round about, the prophet says, "The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining." And in predicting the judgment of Babylon, Isaiah says, "For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine . . . Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger" (Is. 13:10, 13).

14. **And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together.** A "scroll" was the parchment on which books or other writings of that time were written; which, when not in use, were rolled together. Prophesying of the indignation of the Lord upon all nations in recompense for the controversy of Zion, Isaiah says, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree" (Is. 34:4). Here we find imagery similar to that found in our present passage, and from its use by the prophet, we may obtain an idea of the prophetic import of such expressions.—**And every mountain and island were moved out of their places.** This appears as another effect of the great earthquake, the import of which is the shaking down and removing of whatever is oppressive and hostile or in any way an impediment to God's cause and people, as indicated in the passages already cited.

15. **And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains.** The effects of the earthquake are world-wide in their extent; and they affect men in every condition of life, from the king upon the throne to the humble and obscure bond man. As men flee and hide in fear of the natural earthquake, so they are represented as doing in fear of the terrible consequences of this mighty convulsion against the hostile powers of earth.

16. **And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.** Thus, back of what appears on the material surface of this great earthquake or convulsion, men realize that there is a Divine Power operating in it, and they are about to feel the effects

of that Power in retributive judgments upon them for their wicked misdeeds; hence the terribleness of their fear, and the intensity of their anxiety to get away from the Divine Presence.

17. **For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?** The prophet Zephaniah, speaking of God's judgments against Judah, says, "The great day of the Lord is near. . . . That day is a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of wasteness and desolation, a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, A day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers. And I will bring distress upon men, that they shall walk like blind men, because they have sinned against the Lord: and their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung" (Zeph. 1:14-17). Whatever earlier events in point of time this prophetic imagery may have referred to, no careful reader of Jewish history need be told how completely it represents the condition of things attending the final overthrow of the Jewish nation.

While the prophetic imagery under this seal as appears from the use of such imagery in the several passages quoted, may represent any severe judgment of God upon the corrupt and oppressive powers of earth at any time when such power so provokes his wrath as to call for vengeance, yet, in all probability as intimated in what has already been said, here "the great day of his wrath" refers more especially to the time at the end of the Present Dispensation when, in harmony with other prophecies further on in this book, as those at the end of the seven trumpets and of the seven vials, and those in the closing verses of chapter 14 and in chapters 18 and 19, all antichristian power in the hostile organizations and governments of earth will be entirely destroyed; and in connection with the destruction of this power, in accordance with chapter 20:1-3, Satan himself, the great instigator of these hostile combinations, will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit, there to remain through the Millennial Period, which immediately follows that event.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FOUR ANGELS HOLDING THE FOUR WINDS, AND THE ANGEL ASCENDING FROM THE EAST. VS. 1-3.

1 And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

1. **And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.** Before the opening of the seventh seal another vision is introduced for the purpose of noticing two widely different periods in the world's religious history, the dividing line between them being at the commencement of the modern missionary work. The vision seems to open upon the prophet's view at or near the dividing line between these two periods. From what is said further on it appears that these four angels were hurting the earth by holding the four winds. This represents the intolerance caused by the alliance of religion with the civil power of the various nations of the earth,—the adoption of national systems of religion. This intolerance, in some form or other, prevailed almost universally on the earth during this period; and was the great barrier in the way of the spread of the Christian religion among the nations of the earth. And certainly in the latter part of this period, in nearly all these nations, he who went forth to publish the pure gospel of Christ as well as they who received it did so at the peril of their lives.

2. **And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God.** This angel represents the Christian religion rising into new life and vigor, through being anew "endued with power from on high" by the Holy Spirit for the modern missionary work. This angel ascends up from the sun rising, thus ushering in the dawn of a brighter gospel day; and this new gospel day began to dawn upon the world when the first modern missionaries began to publish the tidings of salvation through the crucified One to the benighted nations of the far East.—**And he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,—**

3. **Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.** This part of the vision represents two things. Standing on the dividing line between these two periods, the cry, saying, "Hurt not the earth," looks forward to the breaking away of the chains which had bound the nations in these systems of national religion, and to the placing of the "open door" before the gospel of Christ so that it might enter all nations. And the expression, "Till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads," together with the sealing as further described, brings into view the redeemed of the period just closing; and immediately after the sealing and in close connection with it, is the vision of the great multitude of the second period; and thus all the redeemed of both periods are represented.

THE SEALING OF THE HUNDRED AND FORTY AND FOUR THOUSAND.
Vs. 4–8.

4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.

5 Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

4–8. **And I heard the number of them which were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Juda were sealed twelve thousand, etc.** Twelve thousand from each tribe as stated in the text. As in the Previous Dispensation the visible kingdom of God on earth was not universally extended but principally located in the Jewish nation, and a large portion of the redeemed gathered from that people, so in the first period of the Gospel Dispensation, the Christian religion should not be universally extended, but have a comparatively small number of converts, represented by the limited yet definite number of the sealed; and these should be

gathered from limited portions of the earth, represented here as comprised in the twelve tribes of Israel; and yet truly many of the first of these converts were from these tribes. Although these sealed ones were being gathered during all the centuries of this period of ordeal to the Christian religion, yet as these visions principally represent the breaking away of the intolerance of the first of these periods, and the beginning of the "open door" of the second one, therefore, this sealing is represented in the vision as taking place in connection with these other events. In chapter 14:1-5, these one hundred and forty-four thousand are again noticed; and are there called "the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb,"—according to this interpretation, the first fruits of the Gospel Dispensation.

THE GREAT MULTITUDE BEFORE THE THRONE. VS. 9-17.

9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

11 And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

9. **After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.** And now the period of intolerance having passed away, and the nations being open to the reception of the gospel of Christ, it is published in all the earth; and the redeemed are gathered out of every nation, and kindred, and people, and tongue.

10. **And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.** From these redeemed gathered from all the earth, now bursts forth a great song of Salvation to God and the Lamb in recognition of their sovereign power exerted in their redemption.

11. **And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God.** The angels encircling the throne, the elders and the four beasts, are not uninterested spectators of the great work of redemption; but, falling into a worshipful attitude, they respond to the song of salvation of the great multitude in the exalted strains of the next verse:—

12. **Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.** Thus, in response to the song of salvation from these redeemed ones, these heavenly beings mention some of the most conspicuous attributes of Deity in their sublime strains of praise; and thus intimate that these attributes have been displayed in accomplishing their redemption.

13. **And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?** This question would lead to the opportunity of explaining who they were and whence they came.

14. **And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.** Although we call the time of this ingathering a period of religious freedom, yet still there is "great tribulation;" for Satan is not yet bound, nor Antichrist dead, nor the forces of evil at rest. But, notwithstanding this, they have endured, and their robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb.

15. **Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.** In the vision of heaven given in chapters 4 and 5, no temple is mentioned; but here and in several other places further on in this book, mention is made of a temple. If the temple seen here occupied the same position in relation to the throne as the one seen in Isaiah's vision (Is. 6:1) did to the throne there, then its place among the various objects seen by John in his vision

of heaven referred to above, would be before the throne but on a somewhat lower elevation. Thus, in this temple near the throne, these redeemed ones are here represented as serving God continually, and he as dwelling among them.

16, 17. **They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.** The service of the saints "day and night in his temple" should not be considered as consisting of unvaried monotonous praise confined to the temple; but as praise interspersed with other delightful enjoyments, which are represented by the Lamb feeding them and leading them to living fountains of waters,—either within the ample Heavenly Court, or more likely, to more ample celestial places outside its limits,—and by God wiping away all tears from their eyes. Thus that heavenly home is represented as free from want, and suffering, and sorrow. Blessed home! Blessed associations! Blessed comforts for the tired, the persecuted, the toil-weary servants of God,—gathered home from all the earth.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SEVENTH SEAL. V. 1.

1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

1. **And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.** Perhaps the "half an hour" refers to the time between the opening of this seal and the opening scene of the next vision, as it seemed to John, rather than to any prophetic period of time. If so, then the only remaining question is, What does this "silence in heaven" represent? If the interpre-

tation of the preceding seals—and especially of the sixth one—is correct, it is the silence of a finished work. The Lamb's work of opening the seals is done, and if the final great judgment day be not passed, certainly the Present Dispensation is ended; and with its close the conflicts between these different systems of religion is also ended; all antichristian power is destroyed; and Satan, its great instigator, is bound; the Millennial Period is begun; and the kingdom of God prevails,—hence the significance of this "silence" being "in heaven."

SEVEN ANGELS WITH SEVEN TRUMPETS. V. 2.

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

2. **And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.** Immediately following the short silence at the closing up of the series of events under the seven seals, another series begins; and although, by the narrative, it may seem to follow the events under the seals in consecutive order in respect to time, yet as these carried us through to the final result of the contending religious systems of earth, this can not be. But we apprehend that these visions under the seven trumpets relate to a succession of great political or religio-political powers that should arise in the earth—excepting the later ones—adverse to Christianity, whose acquisitions of power, principally through conquest, would entitle them to claim some share in the exercise of what we may call world-power.

THE ANGEL OFFERING INCENSE. VS. 3–5.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

4 And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

3. **And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.** The visions of this book, as far as possible, closely follow the model of the Jewish Sanctuary; in connection

with which there was a brazen altar for animal sacrifices in the Court, and a golden one for incense in the Holy Place: and the fire was taken from the former with which to burn incense on the latter. But in the Present Dispensation sacrificial worship is abolished; hence, as already intimated in the exposition of chapter 6:9, there is no use for an altar unless it be to represent the offering of the blood of the martyred saints. The powers that should arise under the first six of these trumpets would be opposed to the kingdom of Christ, therefore persecution would more or less prevail. We are not informed where the incense given to this angel came from; but if this line of interpretation is correct, its connection with persecution and with the prayers of the saints, points to the fruitful lives and faithful testimony of the persecuted saints as being that which is represented by this incense.

4. **And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand..** The unflinching fidelity and devout prayerfulness of the tried and faithful saints have ascended up before God, and doubtless have been as acceptable to him as the smoke of any incense ever placed on any altar by human hands.

5. **And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.** This shows that the prayers and testimony of the saints have much to do with the events that were about to take place under these trumpets. When these powers should lay the hand of oppression and persecution on the saints, they would testify to the truth, plead for the right, and cry unto God; and their testimonies and prayers, like the smoke of the incense, would come up before him; and in response, his judgments, like the fire from the altar, would stir up some commotion or convulsion for their relief; and these culminated in such earthquake-like changes and overturnings as were produced by the Reformation and the Modern Missionary work.

THE FIRST TRUMPET. Vs. 6, 7.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

6, 7. **And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth.** Perhaps "the earth" here, as well as in other places in this book, represents the Roman Empire. And at the beginning of the Christian era this Empire was the great World-power of the earth. Therefore in tracing World-power, according to prophecy, its first change or transition would be from the single undisrupted Empire into the kingdoms formed upon its extensive territories through its disruption. And the desolating wars resulting in the rise and fall of many of the tribes and nations that contended for supremacy during the long extended process of disruption, may be regarded as being represented by this desolating tempest of "hail and fire mingled with blood." Now if we can identify the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Empire that are justly entitled to a share in the exercise of World-power, it will not only more fully unfold this passage, but also shed much light upon several important subsequent passages of this book.

We have three Scripture prophecies that undoubtedly foretell the disruption of the Empire; found respectively in Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, and in Revelation, chapter 17. It is very important that we have right conceptions of the formation of these "kings" or kingdoms. And perhaps we can obtain some helpful ideas of their formation from the history of the three great world-powers foretold by Daniel that preceded the Roman Empire; and especially from the third one, the Grecian, which, after the time of Alexander the Great, was also disrupted. Through a large portion of the history of Greece, instead of its being ruled by a single monarch, or from a single seat of power, it was subdivided into a large number of small states, often at war with each other; but their identity of race, their possession of a common language and literature, and of a common religion, formed a bond of union and friendliness which generally made them ready to make common cause against any formidable foreign enemy.

Thus we have World-power recognized as existing in and maintained by a number of more or less independent states grouped together—perhaps around some leading state—and bound together by these common national ties. But as empire extended and embraced divers people—as in the later history of the Grecian people—

it might be expected that this national bond would become weakened and these national characteristics less uniform and marked. And yet, taken as a whole, the history of the Grecian people furnishes us a very helpful ideal as to what we might expect these ten kingdoms to be. Then again, the description and explanation that Daniel gives of the "toes" of the "great image" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream give some important characteristics of these kingdoms. These were "part of clay," representing brittleness—lack of cohesion, and hence division and consequent weakness; and on the other hand they were "part of iron," representing strength, stability, subduing power or disposition for conquest, characteristics that, somewhere in the course of their existence, they must possess in a large measure as compared with other nations of the earth to justly entitle them to be regarded as representatives of World-power.

Now the first people possessing characteristics above indicated that took an important part in the disruption of the Roman Empire were the Northern Barbarians, who may be regarded as a group of conquering tribes or nations that subdued all the Western parts of the Empire. The next successful competitor for a share of World-power was the Saracen Empire, which wrested from the Empire all its Southern parts. The conquests of these two peoples so reduced the Eastern or Greek Empire that it may be considered the third one of these ten kingdoms; and especially would this be true after the revival of the Western Empire in the year 800, if not before. Meanwhile, the Papacy, as represented by the little horn so graphically described in the seventh chapter of Daniel, was rising up into importance; and, as there also foretold by Daniel, these three kingdoms were being rooted up and destroyed.

Now turning our attention to the East, we find a group of successive Tartar and Turkish conquerors, encroaching upon its Eastern borders, and finally subduing the Greek Empire and establishing the Ottoman Turkish Empire in its place. And then turning our attention to the North Easterly confines of the Empire, we find Russia receiving her adopted system of religion from the Greek Empire, and growing into power mainly through her relations with the kingdoms of the disrupted Roman Empire. Now having identified five of these ten kingdoms, the other five will be more readily identified as being the five great kingdoms of Central and Western Europe: Italy, Germany, England, France and Spain.—

And the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up. If "trees" were designed to represent these ten great kingdoms, then in the destruction of the first three mentioned above, this prediction was fulfilled to within a fraction of exact mathematical accuracy. And if "green grass" represented the large number of smaller tribes and kingdoms that sprung up and then disappeared in the long strife of disruption, then this prediction has also accurately been fulfilled. For all the lesser powers that now remain have at some period in their history been in subjection to some one or other of these greater powers, and their continued independent existence is due largely if not wholly to the sufferance promoted by the jealousies of these powers; while not one of these greater kingdoms that remain, after the full establishment of its power, has been wholly so subdued and held in subjection as entirely to lose its independent existence in all its parts; and yet in the fulfillment of visions like this, great variations in such particulars as these certainly might be expected.

THE SECOND TRUMPET. VS. 8-9.

8 And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood.

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

8. **And the second angel sounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea.** In the fall of the Roman Empire, the first extensive conquests for territorial supremacy were those of the Barbarians of the North; whose irruptions into it are here represented as producing changes and commotions similar to the seething of the sea if a burning mountain were cast into it.—**And the third part of the sea became blood.** Blood is the symbol of death,—here of national death. The Western part consisting of about one-third of the Empire was conquered by these people; and, so far as Roman authority was concerned, was dead,—its connection with the Empire being severed; though later for a time the imperial power was restored in that part of Italy called the Exarchate of Ravenna, as will more fully appear in chapter 13:3.

9. **And a third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.** These expressions show the completeness of these conquests. The con-

quest of the third part of the Empire included the third part of its inhabitants, with their wealth, and all that pertained to the part conquered; so far as the jurisdiction of the undisrupted Empire was concerned, they no more lived nor did their wealth any more exist as parts of it.

THE THIRD TRUMPET. Vs. 10, 11.

10 And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters;

11 And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

10. **And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp.** After the Northern Barbarians, the next nation that obtained supremacy by extensive conquests in the Roman Empire was the Saracen. The star falling from heaven represented the descent of Mohammed as a false religious teacher, who was the founder of the Mohammedan religion; and simultaneously with it arose the Saracen Empire.—**And it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters.** Similar to the commotions of the sea, produced by the casting of the burning mountain into it under the preceding trumpet, were the commotions produced by this burning star falling upon "the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters." That reached Rome itself, the seat of empire; but this reaches only tributary provinces comprising the Southern third part of the Empire, which consisted of a large part of her Asiatic provinces and all her African ones; of which all the latter and part of the former were never again restored to the Empire.

11. **And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.** The underlying and impelling force in the conquests of the Saracens was the Mohammedan religion, which greatly increased the animosity and made the strife much more desperate and fatal. The option submitted to their prisoners of war and such others as fell into their power, was: "The Koran, the tribute, or the sword." The effort to impose an exceedingly distasteful form of religion upon the conquered people prolonged the strife in some form or other, and created an intense religious enmity between their own people and those whom they had con-

quered. And the waters or people would be kept in a bitter or contaminated condition through the continued existence of the evil influences of this false system of religion, as well as through its antagonism to other systems as especially manifested in its rise and first introduction into the conquered nations.

THE FOURTH TRUMPET. V. 12.

12 And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for the third part of it, and the night likewise.

12. **And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for the third part of it, and the night likewise.** Under each of the preceding trumpets, as we understand it, the "earth," the "sea," and the "rivers and fountains of waters" have been used to represent the Roman Empire; but under this trumpet the sun, moon, and stars are so used. Each of these various symbols is peculiarly adapted to represent the changes in the condition of the Empire which it is intended to indicate, hence the change in symbols. Each of the two preceding trumpets has indicated the loss of one-third of the Empire; and the darkening of one-third of each of the objects used as symbols under this trumpet represents the loss of the remaining one-third, which was now the Eastern or Greek Empire. While the visions of this book mostly point to Rome as the chief seat of power in the Roman Empire, yet from the removal of the capital to its new Eastern seat on the Bosphorus until the year 800—a period of about 470 years—the honor of this position as far as civil government is concerned, mostly belongs to Constantinople.

But during nearly all this period of time the Empire was declining, the conquests under the two preceding trumpets were taking place, and two-thirds of the Empire were irretrievably lost. And meanwhile the Ecclesiastical State at Rome—the old seat of empire—was growing up into that prominence and supremacy in power, both in civil and religious affairs, which it has since wielded over so large a portion of the territories included in the old Roman Empire. And then, in the West, there arose a new claimant to the

dignity of empire, when, in the year 800, Pope Leo III. transferred the imperial power from the East to the West, by crowning the Frankish King Charles I., Emperor of the Romans. With these considerations before us, we may now perceive that the Eastern Empire, having been smitten by the powers which arose under the two preceding trumpets and thereby deprived of the larger part of the territories that entitled it to be called the Roman Empire, is now overshadowed and darkened by the new complex power that has arisen in the West. And this new power in the West, in the new order of things, now represents the Roman Empire; while the Eastern Empire loses that dignity—if not lost at an earlier date—and now becomes only one of the ten kingdoms represented by the ten horns of the beast, as already indicated under the first trumpet.

THE WOE OF THE NEXT THREE TRUMPETS. V. 13.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

13. **And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!** The powers that have arisen under the preceding trumpets have produced great and calamitous commotions, but the effects of those which are yet to prevail under the trumpets which are yet to follow will be more woful and calamitous. And these woes will fall especially upon "the inhabiters of the earth," or upon worldly men rather than upon Christians,—a limited sense in which such expressions as "the inhabiters of the earth" are sometimes used in this book; and which is to be preferred here on account of the character of its effects upon worldly men and especially of the judgments under the seventh trumpet. The old Roman Empire as a single united power is no more, and the power that shall prevail under the new order of things in the changed Empire will be much more complicated and oppressive; for the powers that should prevail under the first two of these three trumpets would be composed of both civil and religious elements, and in one or both these elements will continue during many centuries if not to the end of the Present Dispensation; and their influence will doubtless extend far beyond the limits of the greatest

area of the Roman Empire. And under the last trumpet, the dominant powers of the earth being on the side of the Christian religion, the final judgments that shall destroy all antichristian power at the end of the Present Dispensation, will take place.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FIFTH TRUMPET. Vs. 1-12.

1 And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

2 And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.

3 And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree: but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

6 And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

7 And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.

9 And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months,

11 And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

12 One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

1. **And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth.** In tracing World-power under this trumpet series

of visions, we come now to the Papacy when, in addition to its extensive ecclesiastical power, it had begun to acquire what may be called international temporal power, mainly through the alliance of Church and State. "Heaven" here is undoubtedly the Apocalyptic heaven of this book, or the kingdom of Christ on earth; and "the earth" is the figurative name used to designate the Roman Empire and the antichristian kingdoms that grew out of it. And the falling "star" represents the fall of the Papacy from its heavenly position in the Christian Church or the kingdom of Christ on earth to an earthly one among the antichristian nations of the earth.—**And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.** "To him,"—the "star" now appears as a personage, who receives "the key" of the pit, and thus obtains access to it and consequent power pertaining to it.

2. **And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit.** The Papacy having descended from its originally designed spiritual position in Christ, in its changed position in which it claims to have a mediating power and a supremacy in both spiritual and temporal affairs, now intervenes between the people on one hand and Christ the Sun of righteousness and the simple Scriptural doctrines and forms of worship as given in his written Word on the other, and thus obscures Christ and his Word from the people. And the errors it introduces or sanctions darkens the whole spiritual atmosphere and prepares the way for what follows in the further description of this power.

3. **And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power.** Through the errors represented by this smoke there arose numerous church officials, as legates, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, monks, inquisitors, etc.; whom the head of the Church could appoint and station or send forth to accomplish the work designed. And these officials often carried their power to such extremes that they became a terror to the people.

4. **And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.** As interpreted under the first trumpet, "trees" represented the ten great kingdoms into which the Roman Empire should be divided, and

"green grass" the lesser kingdoms. Under that trumpet military power was represented as being in operation, and military power deals with national life; hence the green grass and a part of the trees are represented as being burnt up. But under this trumpet we have a different kind of power in operation. Now if "grass," "green thing," and "tree" represent national existence here, as two of these particulars do there, then this command is given to prohibit the officials represented by these locusts from interferring with the existence of national life. While doubtless they have had much influence upon national rulers yet it has not been within their proper sphere of action to raise up or destroy national existence. But the province of their action would relate to men as individuals, rather than to nations; and these men were such as "have not the seal of God in their foreheads,"—worldly men, whether rulers or people, who should be so placed as to be subject to their vexatious interference or harrassing exactions.

5. **And to them it was given that they should not kill them.** They should not maintain their supremacy over men by their own exercise of military power, either in the execution of civil law, or in the conflicts of war.—**But that they should be tormented five months.** Perhaps this "five months" does not refer to any definite prophetic time, as a day for a year; but as the yearly season in which locusts might appear was about five months, so these representatives of the Papacy should have a definite season in which they should torment men.—**And their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.** As chiefs of the whole Church by divine commission, every earthly sovereign of whatever rank must be subordinate to the Roman pontiffs; and whenever opposed or otherwise displeased, their resentment was generally expressed through these their representatives; and their resentment is represented here as more dreadful than the stroke of the scorpion.

6. **And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.** Conspicuous among the tormenting measures of the Papacy were excommunications and interdicts; the excommunicated, in the height of this power, being denied the right of protection from loss or insult, and shunned like men infected with leprosy, and at death denied regular sepulture. By these and many other arbitrary measures, conscience and individual rights and opinions were violated; and men

would make almost any temporal sacrifices rather than suffer the privations these measures brought upon those who dared to disobey; for their consequences were regarded as extending into the future as well as affecting them in this life; and hence this torment is represented as more intolerable than death itself.

7, 8. **And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold.** The spiritual subordinates of the Roman pontiffs nearly always seemed prepared and anxious, like horses for battle, to sustain their supremacy; and for this purpose were frequently commissioned with almost regal power. But the darkness in the political atmosphere as well as in the spiritual, enabled them to claim that all political power was subordinate to theirs; hence, crowned rulers with their armies, and civil magistrates were required to obey their behests, as well as their own spiritual subordinates.—**And their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions.** While they appeared possessed of the dignity, honor, and adornments represented by the human visage, they are also represented as possessed of the rapacity of lions. It is said there have been times when the clergy of the Church of Rome have possessed nearly half the wealth of important kingdoms, and perhaps they were not less rapacious and grasping for both secular and religious power.

9. **And they had breastplates as it were breastplates of iron.** In some countries, at least while this power was at its height, no matter how great their crimes, the priests and higher officials were exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil law, and could only be punished according to the decisions of ecclesiastical courts, which were generally lenient to these their associates; and thus protected, they became possessed of large privileges and liberties.—**And the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.** Thus they are indicated as numerous and exceedingly active.

10. **And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months.** It is said the sting of the scorpion is very painful but it seldom destroys life. So it was not the design that these officials should destroy the lives of the subjects of this power, however restless and unruly under its tormenting exactions and oppression; but only to keep

them in loyal submission to it. And their displeasure was feared; for the weapons they bore were a terror to all classes, and at times have been sufficient to bring even rebellious kings submissive to their feet.

11. **And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.** Here we are told who is the ruler of this power, even Satan; at whose instigation the Christian Church was led into apostasy; and then upon its spiritual ruin was established the highest earthly power, which in turn was arrayed against the true Christian Church wherever it arose again in places within its reach.

12. **One woe is past; and, behold, there come two woes more hereafter.** The expression in this verse seems to be put in here to emphasize the importance of the events under these woe trumpets, rather than to indicate a consecutive order of time in their fulfillment; for the fulfillment of the events under this trumpet and the next one, like that of many other events in this book, is largely contemporaneous; and in all probability that of the events under both these trumpets and the last one will be partially so. Therefore this woe is past in so far as it appeared to John in vision, but not in its fulfillment.

THE SIXTH TRUMPET. VS. 13–19.

13 And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God,

14 Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

15 And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.

16 And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them.

17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone.

18 By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths.

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

13, 14. **And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in**

the great river Euphrates. Upon the mention of an altar in the visions of this book, we have not far to look for some hostile power through which the saints have been slain. When the first one of these four angels was let loose from the Euphrates, the Mohammedan Saracen power including the factions into which it became broken, had been the dominant one in a large portion of South Western Asia for about four centuries. And in the conquests and rule of this hostile power, many of the once flourishing Christian churches had been blotted out of existence, and great numbers of the Christians slain. And if in any of the more extended regions that felt the desolating power of these four angels the Christian religion had been planted in the early days of Christianity, perhaps by this time, hostile power in some form or other had nearly or quite exterminated it. Therefore this angel from the altar, seemingly in behalf of these slain ones, calls for avengers of the blood of the slain; and as each one of these four avengers successively increases the desolation and the number slain in these once more or less Christian lands, as a rule—but with exceptions—its successor should become its avenger.

15. **And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men.** Perhaps by hour, day, month, and year, we are not to understand literal time, nor prophetic time as computed by some, that is, a day for a year; but the definite period of time necessary for the accomplishment of the work of each of the dynasties represented by these angels. And yet, perhaps on the whole, there has been an increase in the duration of the supremacy of each succeeding one over that of its predecessor; especially has this been the case with the last one, the Ottoman dynasty. These four angels represent four great powers or dynasties which had their origin beyond the Euphrates, and with armies often numbering hundreds of thousands of men, overran many countries and slew great multitudes,—here represented as "the third part of men." And they were also the final destroyers of that third part of the Roman Empire which was included in the Eastern Empire as noticed under the fourth trumpet, to which this third part of men may also be an allusion.

The first one of these powers was that of the Seljuken Turks; whose conquests began near the end of the tenth century, and extended into India and over Persia and Turkistan, and then across

the Euphrates into Asia Minor; where, in the year 1075, a branch of this dynasty established a new kingdom called the Sultanate of Roum or Iconium, which lasted about two centuries. It was the capture of the holy sepulcher by these Mohammedans that led to the crusades, and they opposed the crusaders in their marches through Asia Minor and slew vast numbers of them.

The second one of these powers was that of the Tartars or Moguls under Genghis Khan and his successors; who, during the first part of the thirteenth century, overran all the central portions of Asia from the Yellow Sea and the sea of China to the eastern boundaries of the Eastern Empire in Asia Minor, and nearly all North Eastern Europe; but were stopped in their westward course in Europe on the eastern confines of Germany in 1245, by the superior discipline and regular warfare of the Germans under the Emperor, Frederick II.; but they retained their supremacy in Russia for two hundred years.

The third one of these powers was another great Tartar irruption under the renowned Tamerlane and his successors, which began about the year 1370. Having conquered Persia, Tartary, and Northwestern India, about the year 1400 Tamerlane turned his victorious arms across the Euphrates River into Asia Minor; where he defeated and carried into captivity Bajazet, the sultan of the important and growing Ottoman Empire. But the more remote conquests of Tamerlane were for glory and pillage rather than for permanent possession, and when he left his despoiled conquered territories west of the Euphrates the dominion soon reverted to the preceding rulers, the Ottoman Turks. And upon the withdrawal of Tamerlane from India a like change in rulership took place there; but in 1524, Baber, the fifth in the regular line of his descendants, again invaded India and established the great Tartar or Mogul Empire there, which lasted nearly three centuries, and until the English occupation of that country; but was in just that state of decline that made it an opportune time for them to acquire possession of the country.

The fourth one of these great powers or dynasties was that of the Ottoman Turks. Having migrated from their original seats near the southern banks of the Oxus River, in 1299 they began the conquest of Asia Minor. And about the middle of the fourteenth century they crossed into Europe; and, having extended their con-

quests there to about the recent limits of European Turkey, in 1453 they took Constantinople itself, which is still the capital of the Turkish Empire.

16. **And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand.** The number of these armies seems almost incredible, but John particularly says,—**And I heard the number of them.** Therefore there can not be any mistake. But when we take into consideration that from the time when the first of these four angels left his ancient seat and began his career of conquest to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, a period of more than four and a half centuries elapsed; and during nearly all this time the leaders of these four successive great powers or dynasties, at the head of armies often numbering hundreds of thousands of men, were engaged in active and energetic conquest; and if we add to these the armies of their successors down to the present time, we shall see it is no doubt literally true that their number may have been two hundred million men.

17–19. **And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt.** The armies of these migratory tribes were largely mounted on horses, of which they possessed great numbers. These they handled with great skill, and such was the intrepidity and impetuosity of their attacks as to be almost invincible, until they came in contact with the regularly trained soldiery of the nations of the West. The appearance in the vision of fire and smoke and brimstone issuing out of the mouths of the horses, doubtless is intended to represent the use of modern firearms, which, by the invention of gunpowder, came into use during this time.

THE EFFECT OF THESE PLAGUES ON THE REST OF MEN. Vs, 20, 21.

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

20. **And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk.** We come now to a turning point in the history of the Present Dispensation. But before leaving the consideration of the calamitous and impenitent period of time already passed over, and entering upon the consideration of the brighter and better period which begins under the opening vision of the next chapter, a brief statement is here given of the religious and moral effects of the forces that have been operating and plaguing men during the period of time passed. The powers that have appeared under these six trumpets, whether Barbarian, Saracen, Tartar, Turkish, or Apostate Christian, on the whole, have been hostile to the kingdom of God; and the religious character of the people has not been such as to promote repentance and the pure worship of the true God. But rather the systems of religion that have been propagated and sustained by these powers have been such as were instigated by Satan; and hence, they have been demoniacal, grossly idolatrous, and debasing, whether the real idol was placed before the worshiper, or repudiated and abhorred as among the Mohammedans.

21. **Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.** The preceding verse seems to give us the religious effect of these plagues, and this one the moral effect,—the effect as it pertains to men in their individual as well as in their national relations to one another. The leaders and rulers of these great powers were actuated by unjust and ambitious desires for conquest, and for the acquisition of power and wealth, with little or no regard for the rights of nations, of communities, or of individuals; and the contaminating influence of such a condition of things among the ruling classes would descend to the masses of the people; hence, the sacredness of human life, social purity, and property rights, as well as correct religious principles, would be lightly esteemed. Therefore this is a true picture of the sad effects of the religious errors and the moral corruption that pervaded all classes of the people during the period of time when these powers were in the supremacy. And in this period of time was included that period which in history is often called "The Dark Ages."

CHAPTER X.

THE MISSION OF ANOTHER ANGEL. Vs. 1–4.

1 And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth,

3 And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth: and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

1. **And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven.** Six angels have been sounding trumpets, and under each trumpet one or more great power has arisen upon the earth. Under these successive arrays of hostile power of such long continuance it might well be asked, What is to become of the kingdom of God? These powers have sorely smitten it by their religious corruptions, their proscriptive civil laws sustained by military force, and their repeated persecutions. But now through the Reformation and the consequent rise of Protestant power, God raises up a counter movement that shall eventually rise superior to whatever of this hostile power remains to compete with it. In further describing this angel some things are said which seem to favor the idea of regarding him as representing Protestant power in its aspect of friendliness to the kingdom of Christ, and some things that would favor the idea that he more appropriately represents the Christian religion in its increasingly dominant influence both in religious and national affairs. And in either case, back of all that appears to human view, there would necessarily be the power of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Divine Director in all human affairs pertaining to his kingdom. But as it is a chief design under these trumpets to trace national power in its relation to the Christian religion, perhaps the former is the right view. But in taking this view the selfish—not to say oppressive—and worldly spirit which has been so manifest in much of the course of Protestant power must be overlooked; and that aspect of it constantly kept in view which has been so permeated with the benign and potent influences of the Christian religion as to make it its champion and defender and an important instrumentality in the prosecution of its missionary

work, as will appear below from the doings and sayings of this angel. As hitherto national power had been the champion and defender of erroneous national systems of religion, to human view it seems necessary that God should raise up and use similar counteracting power to be the champion and defender of his kingdom on the earth. In the usual course of human affairs it is impossible to see how otherwise this hostile national power could be overcome and changed to friendliness, unless by some miraculous divine interposition heretofore unknown in the current of human affairs.—

Clothed with a cloud. The manifestations of majesty and power on Mount Sinai came from the Divine Presence veiled in the "thick cloud," and the movements of the children of Israel in their journeyings through the wilderness were directed by that Presence in the cloud upon the Tabernacle; so now, hidden, largely at least, from the popular human view, there is a Divine Presence directing the movements of the power represented by this angel; so that by it God's purposes of displeasure against the prevailing hostile power, and his beneficent plans of redemption in the upbuilding and extension of his kingdom on the earth, shall be brought to pass, as predicted in what is further said relative to this angel.—**And a rainbow was upon his head.** The rainbow is a token that God's covenant with Noah shall not be broken; and it appears upon this angel's head doubtless as a token that God's covenant promises in relation to the prevalence and glory of his kingdom in the earth are, in some measure at least, to be fulfilled through his coming.—**And his face was as it were the sun.** Like the brightest natural object whose potent light and heat are universally distributed over the earth, this power should be one of light and its potent influence be extended over all the earth.—**And his feet as pillars of fire.** Pillars indicate strength, and fire possesses purifying qualities; this should be a stable power, and one whose purifying influence should consume some of the chief errors and obstacles that stood in the way of the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

2. **And he had in his hand a little book open.** Through the rise and development of Protestant power, the proscription that hostile power had placed upon the Bible, and the legal restrictions that would confine religious belief to the national system of religion adopted in each country, would eventually be removed; and it brought with it principles that developed into provision for univer-

sal education and a greatly increased amount of useful knowledge in every department of human activity. Therefore there would be an open Bible, freedom of religious belief, and a great increase of knowledge.—**And he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth.** As coming from heaven, this power would have a divinely appointed and a divinely given right to a controlling influence upon sea and land that should be everywhere recognized and respected; and under the protection of this controlling influence the Christian religion should be published over all the earth.

3. **And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth.** This is no mean and cowering power. But when stirred up by oppressive opposing power, like the lion roused from his lair, it lets its voice be heard and boldly comes upon the arena of national competition for the maintainance of the rights it claims; for behind it there is the power of the Lion of the tribe of Juda, whose domain has been sadly encroached upon by this opposing power; and he rises up and uses this new array of power as a means of resisting these encroachments and restoring his own rightful rule on the earth.—**And when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.** These thunders seem to be uttered in response to the cry of the angel; and truly the coming and voice of the power we have mentioned as represented by this angel stirred up the thunders of the hostile power opposed to it, as we shall see from our interpretation of the next verse.

4. **And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.** If it had been God's design that what was represented by these seven thunders should never be known, most likely he would have forbidden their being mentioned at all. But they are not unnoticed, but only sealed up; and most probably this course is taken because their connection with the whole vision is such that in the process of its fulfillment their significance would be unfolded without their being written here. Therefore perhaps it is not presumption for us to endeavor to answer the question, What did these seven thunders represent? A chief object under these trumpets is to trace World-power. Up to the period of time we have now reached in these visions under the several trumpets, as a rule, World-power has been hostile to the kingdom of God; but now a great change is

to take place, and it is to pass into national hands friendly to the kingdom of God.

Under the first trumpet (chapter 8:7), we have traced World-power into the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Roman Empire, as foretold by the prophet Daniel and also in the seventeenth chapter of this book. But now, as represented in the book of Daniel, three of these kingdoms had passed away; which was accomplished by the extinction of the rule of the Northern Barbarians, and that of the Saracens, and also that of the Eastern Empire. Therefore now there would be only seven of these kingdoms left, viz.: Italy, Turkey, Russia, Germany, England, France and Spain. Now, as we understand it, these seven thunders represent the conflicts of these seven last representatives of the old hostile Roman World-power, through which it will pass from these powers to those which are friendly to the kingdom of Christ; and through which also, undoubtedly, the hostility of these powers themselves will be overcome and eventually changed to friendliness. And this transition of World-power will be a movement that will greatly aid in unsealing the mystery of God, and in the work of publishing the gospel to all the tribes of earth as represented in the latter part of this chapter. Through the Reformation, two of these powers, Germany—in part—and England, began to befriend the Christian religion at a much earlier date than the rest. And in the various conflicts that followed this great event, the balance of power began to change over from the hostile to the friendly ones. Sometimes these conflicts were based upon religious questions, as in the case of the Spanish Armada sent against England (1588), and the Thirty Years' War in Germany (1618–1648); but generally they were waged on other pretexts, under which the balance of power in its relation to the interests of the kingdom of Christ was usually in some way involved, and the prestige of hostile power diminished while that of friendly power was increased.

In addition to the two conflicts above mentioned, in the various conflicts of this period of time we may especially notice the Seven Years' War, called in American history the French and Indian War (1756–1763). While in this war, as usual in all this series of conflicts, in Europe Protestant power maintained its ground with increased prestige, yet there its territorial area remained about the same at the close of the war as at its beginning; but in this last

respect, in the colonies—which must be grouped with the several powers to which they belonged—it was otherwise. It was during this war that the vast territorial possessions of France in North America began to pass over to Protestant control,—at this time a large portion to England, and the rest subsequently to the United States. And thus ample territorial provision was made for the new nation that so soon took the foremost rank among the nations of the earth in maintaining the rights of conscience and political and religious freedom. And also during this war French prestige in the East Indies passed over to England; and thus the foundation was laid for her immense territorial acquisitions there, which have since become such important missionary ground.

And then in this partial list of great conflicts that tended towards transferring the balance of power to those nations that were the most friendly to the kingdom of Christ, mention may be made of the wars of Napoleon Bonaparte (1796–1815); the Austro-Prussian war (1866); the Franco-German war (1870); and the contests in Italy (1859–1870), through which the Italians became united under one government that permits the circulation of an open Bible, and recognizes the rights of conscience and of religious liberty. Other conflicts might be mentioned, but these will suffice to serve as guides to those who may further investigate this interesting subject. And then purer forms of religious doctrine and worship derived from an open Bible are elements of solidity and strength to a nation, and stimulate to intellectual culture and to mechanical and scientific skill; and doubtless these have also contributed to the military superiority and national greatness of the powers friendly to the Christian religion. And the hostile powers, recognizing these facts, are removing their proscriptions of the Bible and their intolerance of the Christian religion; so that the time is approaching when they will become kingdoms of Christ.

THE OATH OF THE ANGEL. Vs. 5–7.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

7 But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.

5, 6. **And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer.** This oath of the angel is not that time should entirely cease, but that it should be no longer as explained in the next verse. And he takes this oath because the coming and work of the power he represents should take an important part in solving the mystery spoken of.

7. **But in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets.** The prophets have foretold of a time coming when "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Dan. 7:27); and when "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising" (Is. 60:3) and when "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 1:11). But under each of the trumpets of the six angels that have already sounded some great hostile power has appeared on the earth, and these have sorely smitten the kingdom of God and seemingly reduced it to a feeble power. And now "the mystery of God" in this connection is, How will this hostile power be overcome and the kingdom of God be established in the earth in accordance with these prophetic utterances? These prophetic utterances not only tell that a time is coming when "in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering," but also when "the kingdom and dominion,"—the highest national power of earth,—"shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High." This time, most likely, will come under the seventh trumpet, when, as we shall see, world-power, the balance of power, supreme power, or the controlling power of earth, or whatever we choose to call it, will be in the kingdom of God.

But between the period of time when hostile power should be in the supremacy and the seventh trumpet period when the

supremacy should be in the kingdom of God, there necessarily would be a transition period during which the change of supremacy would be effected; for in the course of human events a considerable period of time would necessarily be required to effect so great a change. And as we understand it, during this intermediate period of time, the power represented by this angel is to be the controlling power of earth; and its divinely appointed mission is to work out this change through the various and many ways in which it befriends the Christian religion. And hence this angel is represented as taking this oath so long before the full consummation of that which is attested for the purpose of calling attention to the fact that the coming and work of the power he represents are to contribute so largely toward solving the mystery of God.

JOHN COMMANDED TO EAT THE LITTLE BOOK. Vs. 8–11.

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he said unto me, Thou must prophesy again before many peoples and nations, and tongues, and kings.

8. **And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said, Go and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea and upon the earth.** The power represented by this angel, as viewed and interpreted thus far, has been raised up and used of God principally for the purpose of overcoming and subduing unto himself the hostile national power that has opposed the progress of his kingdom in the world; but the remaining verses of this chapter bring into view the more distinctly Christian or religious aspect of Protestant power, in which it gives to John as the representative of the servants of God the open gospel for all nations and the needed opportunity for its publication among them.

9. **And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey.**

Perhaps it is immaterial whether we regard the little book as an open Bible, or as representative of an open gospel; as the two may be regarded as inseparable. Perhaps too the little book is suggestive of the great increase of books through the invention of printing, through which knowledge was greatly increased and more generally diffused among all classes of the people. And this increase of knowledge and interchange of thought promoted intense activity in every department of human research and of human industry; and these things made this an opportune time for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. The passing of the book from the angel's hand to that of John shows that this power as a national power does not itself perform the work indicated below; but it presents the open gospel, which necessarily also includes the open door for it, to Christian people as represented by John for its performance; while they are to do the work of publishing the gospel to all nations.

It is true that those who led in the exercise of this power in the earlier part of its existence, did not recognize the compass and the ultimate results of the grand mission for which it was being raised up; for it was then tainted with the hostility of the time, as is shown in its restrictive laws at home, and, in some instances at least, its opposition to mission work abroad. But in judging of the character of a power like this, the whole course of its long existence should be considered. And likewise, during the same time previous to the period of modern missions, Christian people did not seem to recognize the fact that they were to be the divinely appointed instrumentalities for publishing the gospel to all nations. This fact is strikingly illustrated by an incident related in Dr. Joseph Belcher's Life of William Carey, p. 19, which is in substance as follows: One evening, in 1787, at Northampton, England, several ministers being together, the venerable John Ryland, ex-pastor of the church there, asked the two youngest ministers present each to propose a question for discussion, when William Carey, who was one of the two, proposed the question, "Have the churches of Christ done all they ought to have done for heathen nations?" he sprang to his feet and cried out, "Young man, sit down; when God pleases to convert the heathen world, he will do it without your help or mine either."

10. **And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had**

eaten it, my belly was bitter. John, himself an apostle or messenger of Christ, as the representative of the messengers of Christ who should carry this open gospel to all nations, at the angel's bidding, eats the little book, and experiences the sweetness and the bitterness according to the angel's word. And thus is shown the fact that in one view the work of these messengers should be a delightsome work, sweet to the taste; but in another view it would be a bitter work of self sacrifice, of toil, of suffering, and in some instances of a martyr's death.

11. **And he said unto me, thou must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.** At the time of these Apocalyptic visions the gospel had been published to many nations, and in this work John himself had borne an active and an honorable part; and in the early centuries following, the good news continued to spread. But under the hostile powers that have appeared under the trumpets of the six angels which have been sounding, its light has been either entirely extinguished or greatly dimmed in nearly all the earth; so that now this work of publishing the gospel to the nations must again be done. Therefore now, under a new enduement from on high, through the means and opportunity presented by the divinely commissioned power represented by this angel, the messengers of Christ—here represented by this servant of the Lord—"must prophesy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings." And thus again, the message of the King of kings shall be borne, not only to the common people, but also to the kings of the earth; many of whom doubtless will gladly receive it, and count it their greatest honor to know him who is their Heavenly King, and the King of the kings of the earth.

CHAPTER XI.

MEASURING THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THE HOLY CITY TROD UNDER FOOT. Vs. 1, 2.

1 And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

2 But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

1. **And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.** The Revised Version substitutes "and one said," for the expression, "and the angel stood, saying." But whether this direction came from the "mighty angel" of the preceding chapter, or from some other source, doubtless the rise of the power he represents, as explained there, produced the change that gave occasion for the mensuration directed. The "temple," "altar," and "them that worship therein," seem to represent the true Church composed of genuine worshipers; and with these the "court," the larger area and that which contained the temple itself and the altar, should of right also be classed. But, as will more fully appear below, the hostile power that has prevailed has had possession of the "holy city," in which these would unavoidably be included; and now this mensuration seems to be ordered for the purpose of bringing into view the facts, that through the coming of this new Protestant power, these are to be rescued from the oppressive control of this hostile power, and the purer Christian worship restored; and these changes would also, in time, bring about a change in the public mind,—a thing not wholly overlooked in this book,—so that it would more fully perceive the marked difference between the restored purer worship and the corrupt worship that prevailed under the old hostile power.

2. **But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles.** In the next clause "the court" broadens out into "the holy city," and the holy city undoubtedly represents the whole Christian Church. Therefore the Christian Church would form a part of their possessions, the geographical extent of which would be wide as the territorial area over which the Christian religion was spread. The word translated

"Gentiles" more properly means "nations" as rendered in the Revised Version, and, no doubt, represents the civil and ecclesiastical powers that had obtained control over both the Civil State and the Christian Church. And in this connection we may regard the Christian Church as including both the apostatizing Church and the churches of the dissenting sects; and, as the sequel proved, the former they would rule with oppressive power and the latter they would persecute. But here time is traced backward, for the original of "is given" is in the past tense and more correctly rendered in the Revised Version "hath been given," and therefore is a past act when this mensuration takes place; and, in point of time, doubtless the possession indicated takes place during the "forty and two months" mentioned in the next clause.—

And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months. These "forty and two months" are usually and most likely correctly considered as prophetic time; that is, a day for a year, which counting thirty days a month would make the whole period twelve hundred and sixty years. In any attempt to identify these twelve hundred and sixty years, the inquirer would naturally look for some important events as the marks of its beginning and ending. Now the Reformation begun by Luther in the year 1517 seems to be by far the most likely incipient point of ending. It may be called an *incipient* point of ending because—as the sequel showed—it might be expected that it would require a considerable period of time to effect so great a change as would effectually restrain the hostile feet of the Gentiles, composed of so many divers tribes or nations, from treading the holy city under foot. Having determined on an incipient point of termination, we must now look for the incipient point of beginning; and this by mathematical computation would fall upon the year 257. And although no particular event may have taken place during this year that would lead us to fix upon it as the precise point of beginning, yet some exceedingly important events did take place in close proximity to this date,—events that had a vast influence on the future history of both the Roman Empire and the Christian Church. It was about this time that the great conflict began between the Roman Empire and the Northern Barbarians, whose conquests eventually so diminished and weakened the Empire that the balance left became a comparatively easy prey to subsequent conquerors. And also about this time the

unity of the church began to be disturbed by church schisms; and in all probability these gave occasion for the production of such writings as Cyprian's treatise upon "The Unity of the Church"; in which he sets forth the unity of the Church derived from one, the Apostle Peter; and argues that outside of this one, indivisible Church, salvation is impossible. And thus the roots of the Papacy began to appear, and the usurped hierarchical power that was wielded with such tremendous effect in later times began to assume definite and authoritative form.

But while these are important marks that should not be overlooked in the consideration of this subject, yet in Neander's "History of the Christian Religion and Church" (Vol. 1, p. 140), mention is made of an event that seems more likely to be the correct point of beginning. The persecution under the Emperor Valerian came to a close when, in the year 259, he became a prisoner in the hands of the Persians; and his son Gallienus, who had already been associated with him in the government, obtained the sole authority. "He immediately published an edict, by which he secured the Christians in the free exercise of their religion, and commanded the cemeteries, as well as other buildings and lands belonging to the churches, which had been confiscated in the preceding reign, to be restored. He thus recognized *the Christian Church as a legally existing corporation;* for no other, according to the Roman laws, could hold common property." Although at first the legal recognition of the Church by the State seems to be incidental and slight, and the Church had to undergo one more fiery ordeal of persecution (A. D. 303–310), yet, on the whole, henceforth the Church is recognized as having a legal standing in the Empire; and therefore she has come into an incipient legal relation to the State which eventually leads to her being placed in a position to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. While this edict was right thus far, yet imperial power in that age was so highly imperial that everything within its reach must be subservient to it; and therefore recognition was soon followed by supervision; and kindly supervision, under selfish and unsanctified power, ultimately, by oppressive and subversive supervision; and in the progress of events, as the Civil State declined and became broken and the more stable Ecclesiastical State grew up, the larger share of this supervision passed to it, where it eventually became absolute control.

Doubtless the corrupt and oppressive civil and ecclesiastical rulers of the nations that were regarded as being within the Christian Church were most largely the Gentiles that trod the holy city under foot; yet without the Church there was also the hostile power of Barbarian, Saracen, Tartar and Turk, which, though directed mostly against the Civil State, yet operated also against the Church from without, and also contributed to the increase of the baneful power within.

The plan of reckoning periods of time from the incipient stage of their beginning is sustained by Old Testament example. The four hundred and fifty years of Israel's bondage is reckoned from the time when Abraham entered Canaan; although during about one-half of this time he and his successors, Isaac and Jacob, as patriarchs at the head of a tribe, maintained an independent and honorable existence among the nations in the land of their sojourn. And the beginning of the seventy years' captivity is reckoned from the first exercise of Babylonian power over Jerusalem, although the city was not finally taken and destroyed until more than one-fourth of this period had passed. And then as the period of captivity closed at the publishing of the edict of Cyrus, when the toilsome return journey of the liberated captives was yet to be taken, and the temple and city to be rebuilt in perilous times, so, after our terminal point of the forty-two months (A. D. 1517), the Christian Church, now composed of the Reformed sects, had to endure the most severe persecution of the Christian era, and rise again amid perilous times to the work of publishing the gospel to the nations of the earth. And likewise if we revert to our point of beginning, it required centuries of time for the incipient hostile power to reach its full stage of development. If the edict of the Emperor Gallienus was published in the year 259, then we have for the forty-two months prophetic time, the time from that date to 1517, which is twelve hundred and fifty-eight years; and this may be regarded as sufficiently exact.

But while the application of the period of time represented by these forty-two months to the figurative "holy city" as given above is evidently the one mainly intended, yet possibly it may also apply to Mohammedan rule over the city of Jerusalem itself, which began in the year 637 and excepting the eighty-eight years of its occupation by the crusaders (1099–1187), has continued down to the

present time. Therefore if this application prove to be a correct one the deliverance of the "holy city" from Mohammedan rule may not be very far distant; but how far distant can not now be said, for we do not know whether the above eighty-eight years should be included in the twelve hundred and sixty years or not, neither do we know with what mathematical exactness these figurative numbers represent the pericds of time to which they apply. But if this application of this period of time prove to be incorrect it should not affect the correctness of the figurative one given above.

THE TWO WITNESSES PROPHESY. Vs. 3–6.

3 And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

3. **And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days.** A question may arise here as to who the speaker is. But whether it is Jesus himself who now speaks, either in person or through the revealing angel of this book, or still the "mighty angel" of the preceding chapter, doubtless, under the symbolism of "my two witnesses," we are still considering some aspects of the power that that angel represents, as already interpreted, for the purpose of noticing some further particulars pertaining to it, and also of tracing it down to the time when, in all probability from what is said below of its resuscitation, under a new spiritual enduement and a new exaltation it will be prepared to pass into the more glorious seventh trumpet period of time; when "great voices in heaven" shall say, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." In chapter 17 of this book, speaking of the ten horns of the beast, John says, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb." And in Daniel's prophecy relating to the fourth beast, speaking of the little horn, he says, "And he shall speak great words against

the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time" (Dan. 7:25). Undoubtedly these prophecies relate to this same period of time that we have just been considering, of which it is said, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months." Now as we understand it, for twelve hundred and sixty years previous to the Reformation, these hostile powers, of which the Papal becomes the leading one, wage war with the Lamb in the person of the saints, and are allowed to prevail; but in the end "The Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Rev. 17:14).

But in this war the Lamb does not simultaneously overcome the nations represented by the horns of the beast immediately at the close of this period of time; but he so far subdues two of them, Germany—in part—and England at a much earlier period of time than any of the rest, that they become his witnesses. And as representatives of World-power still, though now on the side of the Lamb, the same principle of grouping would apply in relation to these powers as applied in relation to World-power, as noticed and explained under the first trumpet in chapter 8:7. Therefore the United States would be grouped with England, and the English speaking peoples of the earth would be one of these witnesses, and the German speaking ones the other; and with each would also be included all the Protestant Christianized peoples in their several dependencies of whatever race or language. Thus the strength and influence of these witnesses broaden out and increase. But if either of these two witnesses should later become unfaithful in making their testimony or take sides with the beast power of the earth, the United States, by reason of its great power and Christian influence among the nations, may possibly be regarded as taking the place thus vacated and so the twofold testimony be preserved.

The point of beginning in the testimony of these witnesses is doubtless either at the Reformation or at some now obscure earlier incipient event or events that exerted some influence towards preparing the way for the Reformation; as the decided and fruitful testimony of Huss in Eastern Germany, and that of Wickliffe in England; or it may be at some still earlier important point of time

pertaining to their national rather than to their religious life, for both come into consideration here. As the hostile powers of earth had trod the holy city under foot forty and two months, or twelve hundred and sixty years, so now for a like period of time, expressed here as "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," these two witnesses prophesy. Yet these should not be regarded as contemporaneous periods of time, but the latter as being a later period than the former, but whether wholly later or to what extent partly so we can not now say; for, as observed above, we do not know whether the testimony of the two witnesses should be regarded as having begun at the Reformation or at some earlier date.—

Clothed in sackcloth. If we have rightly interpreted the coming and cry of the "mighty angel" of chapter 10, and the "seven thunders" in that connection, these two witnesses have made decided military testimony on the side of the kingdom of Christ in the great conflicts by which World-power passes from the hostile kingdoms of this world over into the kingdoms that are friendly to the kingdom of Christ. But their character and testimony are twofold. They are not only to be witnesses for Christ by their military power, but they are to publish the gospel of Christ among all nations as well as within their own borders. For through them, under a new enduement from on high, the gospel is now to be proclaimed in all the earth. And in doing this work they are represented as "clothed in sackcloth," because the making of this testimony is attended with much of trial and sorrow, and it is not made through the official representatives of these nations, though they have done something towards it, but through their devout private Christian citizens, who in a humble and quiet way have prayed and contributed for this work, and have sent forth devout men and women as missionaries, whose lives and interests have been wholly and unostentatiously consecrated to God.

4. **These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.** The allusion is to the golden candlestick with his seven lamps thereon, and the two olive trees standing by it, one on each side, as recorded in the fourth chapter of Zechariah; in explanation of which the angel takes occasion to assure Zerubbabel through the prophet that all obstacles will be removed and the temple completed by him. And through these types of the two witnesses we may be assured that all obstacles will be removed

and the spiritual temple of God be built in later times through them, who, by this complete symbolic arrangement for lighting the temple, may also be regarded as lights to the nations; for as the two olive branches through the golden pipes emptied the golden oil out of themselves, so these two witnesses shall empty out of themselves the golden oil of gospel tidings to enlighten the nations of the earth. For, "These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

5. **And if any man will hurt them, fire preceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.** In their religious character these two witnesses are making humble Christian testimony, but in their national character they maintain a supremacy among the nations of the earth. Let any other nation encroach upon their rights or offer any serious insult to their flags, and, unless satisfactory reparation is made, how soon will fire proceed out of the mouth of their guns and devour their enemies.

6. **These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy.** Lack of rain if long continued is equivalent to scarcity of food if not of actual famine; and the supremacy of these powers would give them a controlling influence over the distribution of the commercial commodities of the earth. And through being the Lord's depositaries of the waters of life, by their indifference and inactivity, they could shut heaven that it rain not the spiritual rain on the earth in the days of their prophecy.—**And have power over waters to turn them to blood.** Waters denote peoples, nations; and to turn them to blood means to deprive them of national life through conquest or other display of superior power. And the vast and increasing area of their territories, and especially those of England, attests their power in this direction.—**And to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.** While through being the superior powers they could smite and harass the lesser ones, it might be supposed that Christian principle would restrain them from any oppressive and unjust use of such power; but instead, like all things human, they are imperfect and tinctured with worldly policy, arrogance, and selfishness. But on the whole, they are true witnesses; for wherever their flags float, the servants of God may go bearing the message of salvation through the crucified One.

THE TWO WITNESSES KILLED AND RAISED AGAIN. VS. 7–12.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them.

7. **And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.** This testimony will be finished at the end of the "thousand two hundred and threescore days" during which these two witnesses prophesy, as noticed in verse 3 above. "The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit" is undoubtedly that form of antichristian ecclesiastical power that grew up out of the declining Roman Empire, which together with such hostile power as still remains in any of the ten kingdoms that also grew out of it still continue to represent that Empire. In chapter 9:1, 2, the potentate at the head of this power is represented as receiving the key to and opening the bottomless pit, and out of its smoke come forth the numerous active officials represented in that connection. According to the views already expressed this power takes a leading part in treading the holy city under foot during the period of time represented by the forty and two months; but later while the two witnesses prophesy, it seems to be held in restraint through their superior power and influence. But now again this power seems to regain the supremacy for the period of three days and a half, which, if reckoned as prophetic time, would be three years and a half, and kills these two witnesses.

As we view it this event is a future one, and how much of the hostile civil power of any one or more of the ten kingdoms may still remain unsubdued by the Lamb in their war with him as related in chapter 17:12–17, and contribute to this end, we can not

now say. But if we are correct in interpreting the expression "the tenth part of the city" in verse 13 as representing one of these ten kingdoms, as will appear there, then certainly there will be one still remaining hostile at that time. And it will be by beast power all the same, whether the slaying of these witnesses is consummated by hostile power raised up within their own borders or elsewhere through the instigation of the beast, or whether it be by the remaining hostile civil power of some one or more of these ten kingdoms, or whether both contribute to this end. And then there is the further consideration as to how much Mohammedan and Pagan power may be allied with and included in this beast power, and also contribute to this end; for all this hostile power originally came from the same Satanic source.

8. **And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt.** Perhaps their national forms and boundaries will still remain, while the functions of national life as previously exercised by them will be suspended. "The great city" is the Roman Empire now representatively continued by the hostile power described in the preceding verse; whose spiritual wickedness is typified by Sodom; and its oppressiveness, by Egypt. And as these two witnesses had been formerly, in part at least, included in that Empire, and as this hostile power that continues to be its representative has again overcome them, their dead bodies are said to "lie in the street of the great city."—**Where also our Lord was crucified.** Our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, then under Roman authority; and therefore within the figurative great city.

9. **And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and a half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.** The power of the beast may deprive these two witnesses of exercising the functions of national life and of continuing their missionary testimony, but it can not extinguish their forms. So far as it is spiritual it would be dependent on the nations to do this. But whether spiritual, civil, or military, it is under restraint and can go no further. In a human point of view, perhaps the dominant nations are in sympathy with the new power within; or, without, the adjustment of the balance of power may be in the way. Therefore, in form, the two witnesses still exist and are seen during these three days and a half.

10. **And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.** Notwithstanding the Christian testimony of these two witnesses published to the nations, doubtless, there will still continually remain a large number of both rulers and people among them in sympathy with the beast, who are represented here as "they that dwell upon the earth." And to these adherents of the beast, who still remember the smart of his humiliating descent from the dominant position of power to a lower one, the religious restraints and the exercise of the superior national and also international power of these witnesses that caused the descent and also the continuance of its existence, would be tormenting and vexatious. And then again, as is often the case on the part of superior power, in their civil and international relations these two witnesses may have been, at times, vexatiously intermeddlesome and overbearing. Therefore when they are slain and the beast element of power has again become the dominant one, those who zealously adhere to him celebrate these events seemingly with international rejoicings, and so make merry and send gifts one to another.

11. **And after three days and a half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.** It is very likely that the Spirit and providence of God will be so conspicuous in the perhaps sudden and unexpected movement through which they are to be restored to their former national and religious life again, that all who see it will recognize the divine agency in the movement, and be overawed by it.

12. **And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud.** In this book "heaven" is often used to designate the kingdom of God on earth, and most likely is used in that sense here; and if so, then these two witnesses now become so fully and decidedly Christian that they are regarded as being within the kingdom of God in a higher sense than heretofore.—**And their enemies beheld them.** Doubtless the rejoicings of their enemies are changed to amazement and chagrin as they behold the exaltation of these two witnesses; who now rise to a higher and holier condition of religious character, and in all probability become reinstated in their former position of supremacy among the nations.

A GREAT EARTHQUAKE. V. 13.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

13. **And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell.** As this earthquake takes place at the same hour that the two witnesses ascend up to heaven, undoubtedly these two events bear some relation to each other. "City" here, like "great city" in verse 8, and also in other places in this book, is a figurative expression representative of the Roman Empire; and "the tenth part of the city" most likely indicates one of the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Empire that still retains its hostile character. The time of the sixth trumpet seems to be prolonged so as to take in this event. Therefore—though aware of the hazard of doing so—we may venture to say that possibly this kingdom may be the Ottoman Empire, which arose under this trumpet, and now falls; and probably in its fall the fate of the Mohammedan religion may be largely involved. Or, more likely, it may be the Russian Empire; for this is now the stronger one of the two powers, and prospectively seems likely to be the more enduring one. And then Russia has already acquired a large part of the ancient seats and possessions of the Tartar and Turkish dynasties noticed under this trumpet; and seems likely to acquire much more, and possibly the Ottoman Empire itself. And thus the fall of this kingdom would involve the fall of the hostile power in all these vast regions that are now so hostile to Christian missionary work. And this hostility sustained by such formidable power may cause this to be the last of the ten great kingdoms to be overcome by the Lamb, as related in chapter 17:12–17.—

And in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand. Whether this number slain only includes men of rank, as some interpreters think, or whether it represents a full and complete or very large number, we can not now say. But the number is sufficient for the accomplishment of the object in view, as appears from the next clause.—**And the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.** Undoubtedly in the fall of this power the people will so plainly recognize the movings of the Spirit of God and his providences that they will turn from their hostility and fear and worship him. And the Christianizing of this people will prepare the way

for the sounding of the seventh trumpet and the announcement that "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." And thus never again shall hostile World-power entirely regain the supremacy.

THE SEVENTH TRUMPET. VS. 14–19.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

16 And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

14. **The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.** The second woe is the sixth trumpet, and the third woe the seventh one. Through the events that take place in connection with the coming of the "mighty angel" as related in chapter 10, and the prophesying of the two witnesses, it seemed as if the time of the sixth trumpet was about past, and the seventh angel beginning to sound as intimated in the oath of the angel in chapter 10:5–7, when the "mystery of God" would be unfolded and his kingdom be established in all the earth. But the seventh trumpet seems to have been delayed in order that the sixth trumpet period might be prolonged so as to include the reaction that resulted in the slaying of the two witnesses; and then the seemingly long continued resistance of the kingdom subdued by the earthquake as noticed in the preceding verse, also seemed to stand in the way of the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as contemplated under the seventh trumpet. But now, these events being past, the sixth trumpet period ends, and that of the seventh trumpet begins.

15. **And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.** Under each of the six trumpets that have already sounded, some great power has exercised suprem-

acy; but under this seventh one, the kingdoms of this world are overcome and the kingdom of God becomes the supreme one.—**And he shall reign for ever and ever.** Although hostile power may yet again and again fiercely assail the kingdom of God, yet it shall never again obtain the supremacy over it.

16, 17. **And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats,**—as described in chapter 4:4,—**fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.** The redeemed have long realized the wickedness and oppressiveness of the power that so long held sway on the earth; and now through these elders as their representatives before the throne, they rejoice and give thanks to him who has neither beginning nor ending,—the Eternal One,—because he has taken to himself the power and regal authority that rightfully belonged to him, as he who, all along the course of these events, has been supervising and overruling them so as to bring about the supremacy of his own kingdom on the earth as it now appears.

18. **And the nations were angry.** Perhaps the nations were angry because of the restraints which God has justly exercised over their unjust and oppressive designs. And certainly they were angry with each other as so manfestly appears from the visions of this book which so vividly represent their strife and mighty contests with each other.—**And thy wrath is come.** The long continued angry strife of the nations had constantly provoked God's wrath; but now the supreme power on earth has passed over into the kingdom of God, and the allotted time for the sufferance of this strife has run its course; and therefore, it must cease under the wrathful judgments of God upon the wicked nations.—**And the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth.** We are now coming to the close of the Present Dispensation; the "time of the dead" and of the giving of this "reward," in all probability, is the time of the first resurrection, which is more fully dscribed in chapter 20:4; in close connection with which will be the complete destruction of all the antichristian power that has corrupted and destroyed the earth.

19. **And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament.** "The ark of his testament" or covenant was a perpetual symbol or memorial of God's covenant promises to Israel; but it was hidden from common view in the Holy of Holies,—the inner sanctuary of the Jewish Temple. And now the events in this connection usher in the promised and long looked for Millennial Period; and the temple is represented as being open, and the ark of the covenant seen, to show that the promises of God are now being consummated, and the long promised latter day glory is just at hand, and the mystery of God's providential workings that lead to this time, is now disclosed to view.—**And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.** These, doubtless, are representations of the means that God uses to "destroy them which destroy the earth;" and with their destruction, as further represented in chapters 14:14-20, 16:18-21, and 19:17-21, all antichristian power will be destroyed from the earth; and in connection with this, in all probability, Satan will be bound; and then the Present Dispensation will close, and the Millennial Period begin. Although during the seventh trumpet period of time "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;" yet there is a sufficient amount of hostile power still left on the earth to make it a period of strife. It seems that Satan "knoweth that he hath but a short time," and therefore he now exerts all his power and ingenuity in combining and marshaling all the remaining antichristian forces of earth against the kingdom of God. And the "woe" of this trumpet is the woful judgments that fall upon these hostile forces, and in the end complete their destruction.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WOMAN AND THE DRAGON. VS. 1–5.

1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

2 And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

1. **And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.** From representing the closing events of the Present Dispensation, these visions now return to the beginning of the Christian era, and represent a new series of events in the history of the Christian Church, principally in her relation to the Roman Empire in its various hostile forms, Pagan and Papal, civil and religious, united or disrupted into the ten kingdoms; which is called here the great red or flame-colored dragon, perhaps on account of its all-devouring character. The "heaven" of this chapter represents the kingdom of God on earth, but doubtless it appeared to John as the Apocalyptic heaven described in chapters 4 and 5. The woman represents the true Christian Church, which is bronght into view here under the majestic and glowing imagery of "a woman clothed with the sun,"—the symbol of Christ's righteousness; and "the moon,"—or earthly things,—"under her feet;" and crowned with "twelve stars,"—which shows her royal position, and points to the twelve apostles as the honored instrumentalities in her earthly origin.

2. **And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.** The significance of this verse will appear further on.

3. **And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.** These characteristics are given here as marks by which to identify this "great red dragon" as the Roman Empire. The ten horns have already been identified under the first trumpet

(chapter 8:7); and the seven heads most probably represent the various forms of government under which the Empire arose and exercised its authority,—as kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes, dictators, emperors, and the Western or Holy Roman emperors subsequent to the year 800. These heads are represented as crowned because the officials who bore these names exercised kingly power. But the question may arise, Why should the Roman Empire appear in heaven? To which it may be replied: As seen and described in this chapter, all the various forms of the Roman Empire seem to be taken into consideration, civil and ecclesiastical, united and disrupted; therefore the union of Church and State in both the united and disrupted forms of the Empire is anticipated; and thus, as a Christian government according to the popular view, and through its relation to the Church, it is "in heaven" here in the same sense that the Church is "in heaven."

4. **And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.** Here, doubtless, heaven represents the Christian Church; and "the earth," the dragon's dominion; and "stars," as in chapter 1:20, the angels or pastors of the churches; and "his tail," the last form of the dragon's existence; and "the third part," probably, one of the three great divisions into which the Christian Church is regarded as divided,—the Roman, the Greek, and the Protestant. Then in drawing these "stars" unto himself and casting them down to the earth the dragon becomes the head of an apostate church. And thus in this connection three very marked forms of the dragon are represented, descriptive of his whole existence: a first one of united empire under the seven heads, which was in existence at the time of the writing of this book; a second one of disrupted empire under the ten horns or kings, which then was yet to come; and still another, his last one,—the apostate-church form as represented by his power over the stars of heaven.—**And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.** This the dragon did in the person of the Roman rulers at Jerusalem, who stood ready to slay the Lord Jesus Christ; as Herod did when he slew the children at Bethlehem, and as Pilate did when—although at the instigation of the Jews—he condemned Jesus to be crucified.

5. **And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his**

throne. As intimated above, this child was the Lord Jesus Christ; and in his incarnation, travail of soul, and painful sacrificial death on the cross, the Church is represented as travailing. And although the Roman rulers thought they had devoured him by crucifying him, yet he rose again, and in his ascension to heaven "was caught up unto God, and to his throne." And from there, the central seat of power in the universe, concealed from human eyes unless divinely enlightened, and hence, generally unrecognized in human history, now by the right of redemption in addition to his right as Creator, he rules the nations with a rod of iron. In the graphic description of his person and work in chapter 19:11–16, it is said of him he is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war," and the name he bears upon him is "King of kings, and Lord of lords."

WAR IN HEAVEN, AND THE WOMAN FLEES INTO THE WILDERNESS. Vs. 6–17.

6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

7 And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels,

8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

12 Therefore rejoice ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

16 And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

6. **And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.** The account of the woman fleeing into the wilderness seems to be interrupted at the end of this verse in order that the cause of it may be given; and when that is given, which is the "war in heaven," it is resumed again; for these two events are so closely related to each other that they are noticed together. Therefore we pass this verse for the present.

7, 8. **And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.** As already observed, "in heaven" means in the kingdom of God on earth. And this "war in heaven" represents the long conflict between the dragon or Roman Empire in its diverse forms as already indicated in the first part of this chapter, and the true believers in Christ, which culminated in the Reformation. The true believers perceiving the wickedness of the prevailing ecclesiastical power and the corruptions of the so-called Christian Church, withdrew from it and formed separate churches. And this stirred up the wrath of the Head of the Church against them, who, with "his angels" or subordinate adherents, ecclesiastical and civil, turned his persecuting power against them; and as they sprung up here and there, would again and again waste and scatter them. Thus the conflict went on, the dragon seemingly having the upper hand; for the "holy city" was being trodden under foot. But the time of the Reformation came, when Luther and his associates and co-laborers fought against the dragon by exposing the corruptions that had been introduced into the Church of Rome, and by teaching the people the doctrine of salvation by grace from the Bible, and by translating it into the vernacular tongues of the people so that they could read and judge for themselves. And thus, although it had already been known to many of the true believers, it now became a better established and more widely known fact that the Church of Rome with the civil and ecclesiastical supporters of its corrupt teachings and oppressive power, was no longer the true Church of Christ; and therefore, "neither was their place found any more in heaven." But now, instead of being recognized as occupying the highest place in the kingdom of God on earth, the power at the head of the Church must henceforth be considered by

the true believers as being entitled to no higher rank than that of the secular powers of earth.

9. **And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.** Satan was deceiving the world by assuming the livery of so-called Christian governments and of a Christian Church, while in fact both governments and church were being "cast out into the earth," or recognized and regarded among men as well as before God, as worldly institutions; and therefore unfit for a place in the kingdom of God. Perhaps the vision here is mostly designed to represent the exercise of the spiritual forces of the Reformation, but the view will be incomplete without a glance at the accompanying civil forces. The authority of the Church of Rome was upheld and defended by the civil power of its adherents, and it is difficult to see how the churches planted by the Reformers amid this hostile power could have been maintained without the friendly support and defense of the civil power where they were planted. But in the course of events the civil power upholding these two forms of religion came into conflict; and as a result of such conflict the Reformed religion was recognized and established in the Protestant states of Germany by treaty stipulations, as at the treaty of Westphalia at the close of the Thirty Years' War, in 1648; and thus the power of the Roman Empire as being considered here, civil and ecclesiastical, was dethroned and cast out of the Protestant part of Germany. And by the breaking off of the allegiance of England to Rome by Henry Eighth in 1534, the same result had already been reached there. Thus in the war of the ten horns or kingdoms with the Lamb, as related in chapter 17:14, the Lamb was beginning to overcome these hostile kingdoms. And these were important events in the progress of Germany and England as the "two witnesses," as identified in chapter 11:3. And thus God began to prepare a place in "the wilderness" for the woman, of which more will be said further on.

10. **And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ.** The baneful power at the head of the Church had nearly obliterated the saving efficacy and beneficial power of the Christian religion; but now the deceitfulness and corruption of that

power are exposed and it is cast out, and these again appear and operate in their purity and efficacy; and hence the kingdom of God and the rule of Christ enter upon a new epoch.—**For the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.** The "accuser" had claimed to be in the kingdom of God, and had generally been regarded by men as well as by himself as not only in the kingdom of God but at the head of it; and therefore occupying a position before God. And from this high position of power, he and his adherents and supporters had spoken against "our brethren," the saints, and had denounced and persecuted them "day and night,"—unceasingly. But now this high position is shown to be a false one, and he is cast down from it; and parts of his dominion are wrested from him, and now become to the true believers places of refuge from his persecuting power, and also centers of Christian influence and power out of his reach, from which the gospel should again go forth to bless, elevate, and ennoble the nations of the earth.

11. **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.** The redeeming and cleansing power of the "blood of the Lamb" brought them into direct and close communion with God and was a personal inspiration that made them purer, nobler, and more courageous upholders and defenders of the true Christian faith; and in the purity of their lives they were living witnesses for God, and their conformity to Scriptural doctrine and order bore testimony to the truth; and also their activity and zeal in making both public and private Christian testimony was an overcoming power.—**And they loved not their lives unto the death.** Their faith in God and devotion to the truth received from him was stronger than their love of life; therefore they could meet a martyr's death when called to do so, or if necessary, could lay down their lives on the battle-fields of the great contests which, as we have already seen, were waged against the kingdom of God by the hostile forces that trod under foot the "holy city."

12. **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.** The expression "ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them," stands in contrast with "the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea." In this "war in heaven" parts of his do-

minion have been wrested from the dragon, and in an important sense have now become the kingdoms of God,—designated here as "heavens," and their inhabitants as "ye that dwell in them;" and the dominions still held by the dragon for a short time are designated as "earth" and "sea," and the inhabitants as "inhabiters of the earth and of the sea." These divisions were made through the religious and civil contests connected with the Reformation which resulted in the establishment of the Protestant religion and of Protestant power. This result of these contests is the beginning of the end of the dragon's power. From his high place as universal head of both civil and religious power he now "is come down" to the position of local head for "a short time" longer in his remaining dominions. But in being deprived of a part of his power and dominion he sees that the whole will eventually be wrested from him. Therefore he is full of wrath, the result of which was that, after the Reformation, the fiercest persecutions of all the ages were waged against the true Christians who were still within his remaining dominions; and thus the Christian churches of the Reformed sects that then sprung up or had previously existed here and there in these dominions, were now almost wholly obliterated, and the inhabitants left in almost total spiritual darkness.

13. **And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman that brought forth the man child.** Being cast down from heaven, or his high seat of almost universally acknowledged authority in the kingdom of God on earth, his persecuting power would now be confined to "the earth" or his remaining dominions; where he now persecutes the woman, or true Christian Church, with increased wrath and vigor.

14. **And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.** "Her place" in the wilderness is the place spoken of in the sixth verse as "prepared of God," and the verses following, which we have just been considering, tell how this place was prepared; even by the war in heaven which, as we have interpreted it, represented the conflicts which culminated in the Reformation period of time together with the subsequent religious and civil contests, through which the Protestant states or countries were freed from

the dominion of Rome. As we have already seen, the two leading Protestant countries, Germany and England, were also the two witnesses of chapter 11:3; and with them would be grouped their respective provinces together with any independent nations of like character that might grow out of these provinces. Therefore the United States would be grouped with England; and thus it would also be included in "the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God." And while to Germany and England belong the honor of being the pioneer countries of the Reformation, to the United States belongs the honor of fully perfecting and establishing the religious toleration and the religious equality introduced by the Reformation.

In this book the Roman Empire in its various successive forms is sometimes called "the great city," as in chap. 11:8; and from his position in the interior of "the great city," or Empire, near the great centers of Christian influence and activity, we may imagine the Seer in vision casting his prophetic eye away to the northwest confines of the Empire and thence across the Atlantic Ocean, where he sees in the wilds of Northern Germany and of England,—then the home of pagan barbarians—and in the literal wilderness of North America, the place prepared of God; to which he also sees the woman, with her "two wings of a great eagle," which doubtless represent ships, fleeing from the face of the serpent,—fleeing out of his remaining dominions into these new Protestant dominions especially prepared of God for her. She has escaped from "the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt," where she has been terribly oppressed and persecuted, into this wilderness. At first it is a wilderness indeed; and she has a fearful wilderness journey to make before "the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose," and this new promised land shall be "a land flowing with milk and honey." But here "she is nourished,"—provided for, comforted and defended,—"for a time, and times, and half a time." As generally interpreted, a "time" is a year of three hundred and sixty prophetic days, or three hundred and sixty years; and "times" would be two such periods, or seven hundred and twenty years; and "half a time" would be one-half of such a period, or one hundred and eighty years; and all these added together make a period of twelve hundred and sixty years. And this is the same length of time that the two witnesses prophesy, and the two periods are very probably contemporary ones, or largely so.

15. **And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.** The word "flood" properly translated would be river. The terms "serpent" and "dragon" seem to be used interchangeably here. And it should be constantly borne in mind here that these terms represent what remains of the Roman Empire, consisting of six of the ten kingdoms into which the Empire became divided, the German states which still remained faithful to Rome now being counted as one of these kingdoms; and at the head of the whole,—with two exceptions, Turkey and Russia,—was the Papal power. Therefore it is the dragon that speaks and acts all the same whether it be through the power at the head, or through the rulers of these remaining kingdoms that still adhere to the head or otherwise are of like hostile character. Perhaps this "water as a flood" or river represents the efforts that for a long time after the Reformation were repeatedly made at the instigation of the serpent, through which he endeavored to overcome the Protestant powers and carry away or overwhelm the woman or true Christian Church.

16. **And the earth helped the woman; and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.** The "earth" in this connection, as we have seen, is the place where the dragon still exercises his power and authority; and the power on his side is far the strongest; so that if it had been thoroughly united and concentrated against the Protestant power at its beginning, it must certainly have overwhelmed it. But, although out of the mouth of the dragon issued a stream of excommunications and anathemas against those who adhered to the Reformed churches, and of exhortations and commands to his own people for the marshaling of armies and the equipment of fleets, yet, through some providential interposition, or some lack of unity or of coöperation among themselves, their grandest efforts proved futile, and in the end often turned to the advantage of their opponents. Through the death of the Admiral and also of the Vice Admiral of the great Spanish Armada that was designed to crush England in 1588, it came into the hands of an incompetent commander; and the winds of heaven seemed to be against it; and then there was an entire failure in the intended coöperation with it of the forces gathered in the Netherlands for this purpose. And in 1605, the gunpowder plot was detected in time to save King

James and the English Parliament. And although the rulers of France had zealously endeavored to exterminate the various Reformed sects that had separated from the Church of Rome in their own territories, yet their jealousy of Austria incited them to give the Protestants of Germany just the sympathy and aid they needed in the Thirty Years' War to turn the balance in their favor. And thus in all or nearly all the great contests in which the safety of the woman was involved, whether confined to the countries of Europe or also extending to their colonies, some want of hearty coöperation among her enemies, or some rival power among them, "swallowed up" or averted the forces designed to overwhelm her.

17. **And the dragon was wroth with the woman.** Because, by the rise of the Protestant powers, she has escaped out of his dominions; and hence she is now out of his reach.—**And went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.** Although the woman herself has escaped into Protestant dominions, yet there is a "remnant of her seed" yet left in the dominions of the dragon, who now, greatly incensed at the escape of the woman, turns to make war upon them. And of all the persecutions the Christian Church has ever suffered, none were more terrible than those which followed the Reformation; for by them the remnant of the true Christian Church left in the nations under Papal dominion was almost entirely exterminated.

CHAPTER XIII.

A BEAST RISES UP OUT OF THE SEA, IS WOUNDED, AND HEALED. Vs. 1–10.

1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.

3 And I saw one of his heads wounded as it were to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.

4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.

1. **And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.** In the preceding chapter, under the names "great red dragon," "old serpent," "Devil," and "Satan," we have represented to us the Roman Empire including its prolonged existence as the representative of World-power in the Papacy and in the ten kingdoms that arose out of the disrupted Empire, as represented by the fourth beast described in the seventh chapter of Daniel, and also including the idea that its hostile and persecuting power was exercised under the instigation of Satan. In the process of time instead of the Empire being the single source of World-power, the source became divided between the Civil State and the Ecclesiastical State, and these two sources of power are represented by the two beasts of this chapter. But in order to show their origin from the

old Roman Empire, and their relation to it as its continued representatives, it is necessary that the vision go back, as in this verse and the next, and give us the marks or characteristics of the old Empire, so that the identity and relations of the whole may be seen and recognized.

The Roman Empire was represented by one of the four great beasts of whose origin Daniel so graphically says, "I saw in my vision by night, and, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another" (Dan. 7:2, 3). The sea represents the aggregation of people in nations; and the strife of the winds of heaven upon it, the strife of the nations with each other; and through this some one of them obtains the supremacy, and thus becomes the beast of the vision. In some such way, perhaps, John saw this beast "rise up out of the sea." The crowns upon the ten horns indicate royalty and power, and the name of blasphemy upon his heads show the impious character of the beast.

2. **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion.** Besides his own peculiar characteristics, this beast had some peculiar likeness of each of the three beasts which Daniel saw that preceded him; thus showing that all the ferocity and rapaciousness of all these beasts was combined in this one.—**And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.** In chapter 12:9, the dragon is described as "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." While "the powers that be are ordained of God," yet he does not make them wicked and impious. But when they become so, it is through the deceptive planning and instigation of Satan, who gives such bias to the ambition, the avarice, or other similar propensities of the rulers and leaders of the people as to work out his own malevolent purposes, although, as in this case, it may require the work of many successive generations to fully mature them.

3. **And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed.** The sixth or imperial head of the beast was "as it were wounded to death" in the year 476, when the Barbarians overthrew the Western Empire, of which Rome was the capital. But although "as it were wounded to death," yet the Empire was not wholly dead; for as Bryce says (Holy

Roman Empire pp. 25, 26). When, at Odoacer's bidding, Romulus Augustulus, the boy whom a whim of fate had chosen to be the last native Cæsar of Rome, had formally announced his resignation to the senate, a deputation from that body proceeded to the Eastern court to lay the insignia of royalty at the feet of the reigning Emperor Zeno . . . There was thus legally no extinction of the Western Empire at all, but only a reunion of East and West. . . Once more did a single Emperor sway the scepter of the world, and head an undivided Catholic Church." And yet for the sixty years or more of Barbarian rule that followed the year 476, Rome's relation to the Eastern Empire was but little more than a nominal one, and the wound seemed very likely to be a fatal one. But the wound began to be healed as the result of the Gothic war in Italy (A. D. 536–553), by which the Barbarian power was overthrown and that of the Empire restored and administered through the Exarchs of Ravenna. And for about two centuries thereafter this form of government was maintained in that part of Italy called the Exarchate.

But then again for about the fifty years more before the translation of the Empire to the West, the imperial power was but little if any more than a nominal one; and yet that such a relation did exist is shown by the fact that in both the city of Rome and the Exarchate the years of the Eastern emperors' reigns were employed to date documents. And meanwhile the popes had repeatedly invoked and received the protection of the Franks, and through them had acquired temporal sovereignty over the Exarchate. And the mutual friendly relation between these parties prepared the way for the healing of the deadly wound, which was consummated in the year 800, when Leo III. transferred the imperial power from the Eastern Empire to the Frankish power in the West, by crowning King Charles at Rome, as Emperor of the Romans. And thenceforward the Roman Empire follows the Western line.

4. **And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast.** Most likely the beast here more particularly represents the Empire after the deadly wound was healed, that is the renewed Empire, later on called the "Holy Roman Empire;" and the dragon the old Empire as the representative of World-power, now in the process of disruption; and in the process of disruption a large share of this power passed into the Papacy. And it was

veneration for the old Empire, and especially after it became so-called Christian, together with the conspicuous part taken in the matter by the Papacy—now taking a leading place in representing World-power—that gave power and prestige to the renewed Empire. —**And they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him?** They looked upon the renewed Empire with the same admiration and reverence as was attached to the memory of the old one, and regarded the former relation of Empire and Church as restored again. And the Emperor was considered as the highest civil ruler of Christendom.

5. **And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies.** The pagan emperors had been regarded as the high priests of Paganism; and the Christian emperors retained a somewhat similar relation to the Christian Church, though perhaps less priestly in its character. In the union of Church and State, as Christian rulers they exercised the right to make laws for the protection and perpetuation of Christian truth and Christian worship as taught and practiced at the time. And as the Papacy grew in power, in intolerance, and in persecuting zeal, in some sense they became its mouthpiece,—speaking and acting in accordance with its intolerant and persecuting and hence blasphemous behests.—

And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. Doubtless we are now considering the renewed Empire as represented by the beast after his deadly wound was healed, the termination of which is definitely fixed as having taken place in the year 1806 by the resignation of the imperial power by the last Emperor, Francis II. Regarding this "forty and two months" as prophetic time, it would be equal to twelve hundred and sixty years, which taken from 1806 would bring us back to the year 546,—a date near the middle of the Gothic war in Italy, which had been in progress about ten years and lasted about seven years longer. As already stated above under verse 3, the result of this war was the extinction of the Barbarian power that had inflicted the deadly wound, and its healing begun by the restoration of the imperial power in Italy, and completed in the year 800 by the revival of the Roman Empire in the West. Now as the two beasts of this chapter seem to be especially designed to set forth the relations of Empire and Papacy, the most reasonable application of this prophetic time is to regard it as representing the last twelve hundred and sixty

years of the beast's existence as above indicated; that is, from the restoration of the imperial power in Italy as a result of the Gothic war, which was in progress in 546, to 1806.

6. **And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.** In promulgating laws sustaining a church organization that had drifted away from the simple Scriptural model and become antagonistic to it, and in sustaining its doctrines and worship contrary to Scriptural teaching, this power was blaspheming the "name" and the "tabernacle" of God. And "his tabernacle" here doubtless represents the true Christian Church, so often called heaven in this book; and "them that dwell in heaven" are those who dwell and worship therein, who as dwellers in his tabernacle would be the real objects of the blasphemous words spoken against it. And so far as these laws required conformity to the prescribed forms of worship they would be proscriptive of all dissent therefrom.

7. **And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them.** His voice speaking through the proclamation of impious laws fails to repress the saints and hold them faithful in the communion of the adopted Church; therefore he proceeds to use military power for the purpose of enforcing obedience, and for a time he is permitted to overcome them. Doubtless this same war is noticed in differing aspects, as we have seen, in the preceding chapter. And in part it is also the one predicted in chapter 17:14, which was begun by the beast and, as there represented, extends into and is prolonged by the horns of the beast; but results in the end in victory by the Lamb.—**And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.** The "kindreds, and tongues, and nations" that arose in the disruption of the Roman Empire were many; and all the lesser ones were either entirely subdued or to a greater or less extent controlled by the Empire or the kingdoms which grew out of it that were represented by the horns of the beast. But then the Empire itself was regarded as the temporal arm of the Papacy,—the World-Monarchy attached to the World-Religion. The emperors were regarded as the legitimate successors of the Cæsars, and as having a higher title than that of any of the contemporaneous rulers however great, and one which none might assume unless lawfully elected thereto. And then this Empire stood in the position of a connecting link between the old

Empire and the modern nations of Europe; and therefore it was the principal medium through which the political, the legal and the religious institutions of the old Christian Empire were transmitted to these nations. And through these relations also it exercised a potent influence over the nations.

8. **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.** The word "earth" should be taken in its usual meaning along here; that is, as representing the area of the Roman Empire. In the popular view this power was regarded as a Christian government, divinely ordained, and existing in the divine order of things; and as such it is revered and sustained by the class of people designated. But the inference is that there is another class of people whose names are written in "the book of life," who perceive the true character of this power, and dissent from the popular view, and refrain from worshiping or venerating it.

9. **If any man have an ear, let him hear.** This is a momentous subject, and it has an important bearing on the progress and happiness of mankind; and therefore it deserves the scrutinizing attention of the listening ear and the inquiring mind.

10. **He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.** This indicates that this was to be a military power, and as such it should be subject to the vicissitudes of war; and as it should lead into captivity and kill with the sword, in turn it would suffer like calamities, and come to an end. For several centuries after the renewal of the Empire in the West in the year 800, it was the greatest civil power of Christendom, but the rise of Protestant power and the great European conflicts subsequent to the Reformation, greatly increased the progress of its decline in power as compared with surrounding nations. And finally the end was reached through the ambitious schemes of Napoleon Bonaparte, who, through his military successes, contemplated the transferrence of the imperial power to France and the seating of himself upon the imperial throne; whereupon the Emperor, Francis II, resigned the remaining phantom of imperial power on August 6, 1806. And thus amid conflicts of no ordinary magnitude in the annals of human history, this venerable Empire, whose emperors are numbered in a direct line down from Augustus Cæsar—Charles I, first Roman Emperor of the West,

being sixty-eighth, and Francis II, one hundred and twentieth—came to an end. And henceforth the Roman Empire exists but representatively in its ecclesiastical counterpart, the Papacy, together with such of the kingdoms represented by the horns of the beast as still retain his characteristics.—

Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. For two and a half centuries the old Pagan Empire persistently tried the patient endurance and the faith of the saints. And during the ten centuries of the renewed Empire after the deadly wound was fully healed, it unceasingly endeavored to repress all dissent from the prescribed religious doctrines and forms of worship. And it was the principal medium through which old intolerant civil laws and persecuting power was transmitted to the Papal nations of modern Europe. And so long as it should remain the strong temporal arm of the Papacy, such laws and such power most certainly must have been upheld. But its demise made way for the happy change in the nations that has now so far progressed that those "that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held," instead of being popularly stigmatized as fanatics and heretics, are now being enshrined in the popular memory as saints and martyrs of Jesus Christ; and "the patience" and "the faith" that could not be wholly repressed, are now triumphing over all opposing hostile power.

ANOTHER BEAST COMES UP OUT OF THE EARTH. Vs. 11–18.

11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16 And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18 Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.

11. **And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth.** This beast doubtless represents the Papacy. The expression "the earth" must be limited, as usual along here, to the Roman Empire, out of which the Papacy grew. The World-Empire prepared the way for the World-Religion.—**And he had two horns like a lamb.** Within the Civil State there was a well organized Ecclesiastical State, which, being largely respected in the civil commotions of the times, was growing up into influence and power. And at its head was the bishop of Rome, who was regarded as the successor of St. Peter and the vicar of Christ on earth, and therefore the head of the Christian Church. And then through the absence of the higher rulers from the city of Rome in the time of the Exarchate of Ravenna, he became possessed of an increasing measure of civil influence and authority; which was changed into actual civil rulership about the year 754, upon the conquest of the Exarchate from the Lombards, and its donation to the pope and his successors in office by Pipin, King of the Franks. And later on there was that potent influence that the Papacy exercised in the civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs of the nations. These two kinds of power, ecclesiastical and civil, are represented by the two horns.—**And he spake as a dragon.** Although his exterior appearance was that of a lamb, yet his terrible voice and authoritative words revealed the dragon within.

12. **And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him.** As the Roman Empire had been the great Civil Power of the earth, so now—not less—shall the Papacy be its great Ecclesiastical Power.—**And causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.** Speaking of the "World-Monarchy" and the "World-Religion" which expiring antiquity had bequeathed to the ages that followed, Bryce says (Holy Roman Empire p. 93): "The analogy of the two made them appear parts of one great world-movement towards unity: the coincidence of their boundaries, which had begun before Constantine, lasted long enough after him to associate them indissolubly together, and make the names of Roman and Christian convertible." And none deplored the interruption of this relation

through the Barbarian conquests more than the bishops of Rome, and they diligently planned and labored for its restoration. When, by the victories of Totila in the Gothic war, and the indifference of the Emperor Justinian, the Gothic power seemed likely to become permanently established in Italy, Gibbon says: "The Emperor was awakened by the Pope Vigilius and the patrician Cethegus, who appeared before his throne, and adjured him, in the name of God and the people, to resume the conquest and deliverance of Italy." And later, when Rome was repeatedly threatened by the Lombards, the popes sought and procured deliverance of the kings of the Franks. These are some of the ways in which they aided in perpetuating and sustaining such of the imperial power as still remained in Italy during the three hundred and twenty-four years of Barbarian rule and of the Exarchate. And in the year 800 when the auspicious time had come, Leo III was ready to perform his part towards its full restoration in the West. And thus the bishops of Rome took a leading part in perpetuating the memory and healing the deadly wound of the venerated old Empire; and likewise, they exalted and sustained the later revived Empire all through its existence.

13. **And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men.** Of this beast it is said above, "He exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him." Therefore these "wonders" are manifestations of real power; and though this power should be viewed as largely built up on pretense, yet its acceptance in the popular view would give it the full force of real power legitimately obtained and exercised. Men feared and venerated the power of the old Roman Empire, and not less they should fear and venerate the power of this great Ecclesiastical Empire. Undoubtedly in the vision the "fire" coming down from heaven seemed real to John, but the "heaven" seen by him is the Apocalyptic heaven, which, as we have had occasion before to observe, is chiefly used to represent the kingdom of God on earth. And therefore as this power according to the popular view was regarded as a Christian organization, its mandates may be looked upon as coming down from heaven; and in their relation to the saints, the true kingdom of God, they were hostile and consuming, and hence appropriately represented by this symbol. And then in the sight of his own people he maintains

his supremacy by high pretentions of sanctity and efficacious heavenly power, and uses the fire of anathemas and interdicts to consume rebellion and disloyalty.

14. **And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.** In the original the word rendered "miracles" is the same as the one rendered "wonders" in the preceding verse, therefore these wonders and miracles are doubtless exhibitions of power of the same general character. But there they are said to be done "in the sight of men," most likely indicating that there they relate to men as individuals; while here they are said to be done "in the sight of the beast," and therefore most probably they represent those wonderful exhibitions of international authority which this power was enabled to perform through assuming the character of "an image to the beast." For doubtless it was itself to be the image or likeness to the Roman Empire; that is, it aspired to wield a power as great as or even greater than that of the great Roman Empire. The supremacy of that Empire was acquired by conquest, but the supremacy of this power is represented as acquired by "saying,"—by commanding, by teaching. And thus it instilled into the popular mind exalted ideas of its own duties, its privileges, and its prerogatives, and on the other hand the reciprocal duty of reverence and obedience on the part of the people.

Among the acts that greatly contributed to the prestige of the Papacy were the imperial coronations. Beginning in the year 800 with that of Charles or Charlemagne, for about four and a half centuries thereafter, and in some instances later, it was the custom of the emperors upon election to repair to Rome to receive the imperial crown from the hands of the popes; who in return, as a rule, secured their fidelity to the interests of the Holy See. And the Papacy had a powerful influence in setting up or deposing the rulers of the nations under Papal control accordingly as their authority was conceived to be friendly or adverse to the ecclesiastical interests. And it smote, and generally but not invariably, subdued the obstinately rebellious ones with the all-powerful weapon of interdicts, which may be regarded as excommunication on a provincial or national scale according to the jurisdiction of the

ruler. And then there was the institution of ecclesiastical courts, having an exclusive jurisdiction over persons ecclesiastic, and over cases in law pertaining to spiritual things, and in some other cases a concurrent one with the civil courts. And thus in the subject nations there existed side by side an ecclesiastical and a civil system of law, in which in many important cases the ecclesiastical took the precedence, and through which the priestly orders were exempt from the jurisdiction of the civil law. And by these various means the Papacy obtained a commanding influence and a recognized standing in the nations that admitted its supremacy; and through this great ecclesiastical system so largely changed over from the simple New Testament model to that of the Roman Empire, it "deceiveth"—leadeth astray—"them that dwell upon the earth."

15. **And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast.** The word translated "life" is rendered "breath" in the Revised Version. The power at the head of this great Ecclesiastical State extends to its remotest parts, permeating all the churches in it, and giving to them a prescribed form of doctrine, of worship, and of church life. And thus every part feels the force of the power at its head.—**That the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.** There seems to be some distinction here between the beast power at the head and the body or the subordinate parts of the great whole. The breath that the beast at the head breaths into all the subordinate parts as here represented, is a spirit of mortal hostility to all who dissent from the prescribed worship. But this power does not itself kill, but through its influence over the civil rulers of the nations it has caused that those who would not conform to its worship should be killed. And how faithfully these rulers have executed its persecuting commands against such as dissented from its worship, the history of its persecuting power painfully shows.

16. **And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads.** From what follows it appears that this "mark" represents something by which those who receive it may be distinguished from all others. Is it that impress that the prescribed doctrines, and worship, and mode of religious life make upon the character of the

individual? Or, Is it the rite of christening, through which the name is placed upon the records of the church and the christened one ever after claimed as her own? Certainly the latter has not only been required by the ecclesiastical law, but also by the civil laws of the faithful subject nations; and it is an essential act of obedience on the part of the faithful worshiper. Or again, Is it mentioned simply to bring into view the persecuting disposition spoken of in the next verse? But perhaps different ones would answer these questions differently according to the standpoint whence the view is taken; and whatever the answer, this mark is representative of a distinction that was painfully real to those upon whom the anger and the power of the beast fell.

17. **And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.** Thus those who did not have the requisite evidence of fidelity would be denied all business and social rights, in order that they might be constrained to yield the obedience required of them. On this point Cramp, in his Baptist History (p.113), says: "The general council held at Rome in the year 1179, called the third Lateran, led the way. If any of the heretics held public offices, they were to be turned out of them as soon as they were detected. All intercourse with them was forbidden; there was to be no buying or selling. Contracts with them were declared null and void. . . No advocate was to be permitted to plead for them when they were placed on trial. On conviction they were to be delivered over to the secular power to be burned. And all magistrates and judges were warned that if they did not faithfully execute these decrees, they would be excommunicated." And these or similar decrees were repeatedly enacted by subsequent councils, and also repeatedly sustained by the sanguinary edicts of the subject nations. But some—to their honor be it said—were slow to proceed against their most orderly and industrious citizens.

18. **Here is wisdom.** Here is a chance for its exercise in discerning the true character of the ecclesiastical organization represented by this beast, which has come down in direct succession from the primitive Christian Church. Is it Christian still? If not, When and how did it lose its Christian character? How came it to perpetuate the doctrines of Christianity with such deceptive additions and variations that for centuries the wisdom of so large a part

of mankind should not discriminate between the true and the false? How came it to so ingratiate itself into the favor of the kings and rulers of the earth that their laws and arms should be at its service, even in the proscription and destruction of their most useful and loyal citizens? How came it to secure the sympathies and confidence of mankind so that multitudes should commit their eternal interests to its keeping? Such inquiries have taxed the wisdom of the devout minds of many of its contemporaries who have seen its corruptions, all the way down through the ages of its existence.—

Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six. Each letter of the Greek alphabet represents some number; and according to some writers, when, for any cause, it was not desirable to express the definite name of an individual, it was sometimes customary to designate it in an enigmatical way by giving the number of his name, which was found by adding the numbers represented by the several letters of his name. Now perhaps the word *Lateinos*—the Greek form of the word Latin—is as expressive a name as any that has been applied to this ecclesiastical organization; the numerical value of the letters of which if expressed in Greek would be l=30, a=1, t=300, e=5, i=10, n=50, o=70, and s=200; and these added together make six hundred and sixty-six. Thus Dr. Gill explains this passage in his Commentary; and he also says: "It is well known that the Church of Rome is called the Latin Church, and the pope of Rome the head of the Latin Church, and his seat is in the Latin Empire, and the service of the beast is in the Latin tongue, and the Bible is kept in that language, from the reading of the common people."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAMB ON MOUNT SION. Vs. 1–5.

1 And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

4 These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

1. **And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.** Thus far the prophetic sketch of the Present Dispensation contained in this and in the two preceding chapters, has mostly related to the hostile power of the dragon and the two beasts we have just been considering; but perhaps we have now arrived at the point of time in this sketch when this hostile power was to be confronted and checked if not wholly subdued by the Lamb through such movements as the Reformation and the more recent Modern Missionary Work, including all the train of events produced by these movements. This was a period of trial, when the saints were overcome by the beast,—for in a certain sense the dragon and the two beasts were but one. Notwithstanding this, all through this period of trial, there were some whose names were "written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," who perceived the corruptions of the times and found the way of life through the Lamb slain; and these are now represented as standing with him on the Mount Sion,—a position which, further on in the vision, appears to be "before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders," where they sing the "new song," on the Mount Sion of the heavenly Jerusalem. And the Father's name upon their foreheads shows that those who follow the Lamb are owned and approved by the Father also.

2. **And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.** All through this period of corruption and hostility God has been gathering home redeemed ones, therefore there is joy in heaven. And the auspicious point of time in which this song takes place, if known in heaven—and why not known? most likely increases the joy there.

3. **And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.** The songs and sacrificial worship of the saints of the Former Dispensation looked forward to the work of redemption as not yet wrought out; but the heavenly musicians and these redeemed ones could now sing of redemption finished, of the sacrificial offering for sin as now fully made by the Lamb slain; the efficacy and glory of which the ancients could not fully understand, nor the unrenewed contemporaries of these redeemed ones comprehend. Therefore this new song sounded out by voices from "before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders," as the representatives of creation and redemption, in an earthly point of view at least, could only be learned by those who had personally experienced the power and blessedness of redeeming love in the redeeming work of the Lamb.

4. **These are they which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.** These were undefiled by the idolatry and corruptions of the times in which they lived, and they followed the Lamb by observing all things whatsoever he had commanded as found in his written Word.—**These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb.** Thus they are definitely identified as belonging to the human race; and doubtless represented the first fruits of the Christian Dispensation, gathered through all this period of trial we have been considering in the two preceding chapters. And they are also the same as those sealed in chapter 7:3–8.

5. **And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.** Not that they never said anything false or vile, or were always sinless; but they had come in true penitence and obedience to the Lamb, and been washed in the

fountain of his blood, and thus been cleansed and made faultless before God.

THE ANGEL HAVING THE GOSPEL TO PREACH. VS. 6, 7.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,
7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

6. **And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.** We have now come to the period of time when the first fruits have been gathered in, and the hostile power we have been considering is so far subdued as to admit of the gospel being published to all nations. Doubtless this angel represents the modern missionary work of the Church of Christ, through which this work is to be done; and he is represented as flying "in the midst of heaven" so that his voice may sound out over all the earth, and thus show that the work is to be world-wide. And the result of this work is without doubt the great ingathering noticed in chapter 7:9–17.

7. **Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him.** "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;" and to glorify God should be the end and aim of every human life. But there is an especial reason given here why men should fear and glorify God:—**For the hour of his judgment is come.** Through the proclamation of the gospel accompanied by the movings of the spirit of God upon the nations, the old despotic hostile powers of earth with their corrupt systems of state religion, are judged and found wanting, and must give place to better and more friendly forms of government, and to purer Christian worship.—**And worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.** As the missionaries have gone forth to proclaim the good news of salvation, what have they found among the nations but a mass of idolatry and corruption? And the burden of their preaching is that they should turn from the worship of their false gods and worship the true God, who is the Creator of all things, and the Reedeemer of mankind.

THE PROCLAMATION, BABYLON IS FALLEN. V. 8.

8 And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

8. **And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.** Instead of the names "dragon" and "beast" as used in the two preceding chapters, we have the name Babylon used here and also elsewhere further on in this book. Perhaps as the Papacy largely loses its temporal power derived from its relation to the Roman Empire and becomes a more distinctly ecclesiastical organization, the name "beast" is dropped and that of the great city that so mightily oppressed God's ancient people Israel is used instead. We need not regard this fall of Babylon as the one in which her final destruction is to be consummated at the end of the Present Dispensation, as described in chapters 18 and 19. But the change from the period of intolerance to that of the open gospel to the open nations necessarily involved the fall of the Papacy from its position of intolerant supremacy among the nations, and the transformation of the nations from an attitude of hostility to the kingdom of Christ to one of friendliness. Now the position in which this angel's proclamation stands to what goes before and what follows in this chapter, and especially to the proclamation of the preceding angel of an open gospel to all nations, seems to indicate that this change of the Papacy from its position of superiority to one of inferiority among the nations, is what is intended to be represented by this angel's cry, "Saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city." And with this fall, which necessarily includes considerable progress in the Lamb's conquest of the kingdoms that grew out of the disrupted Roman Empire as described in chapter 17:14, the hostile World-power of the "great city" that has come down the ages through the real and representative forms of the Roman Empire, is overthrown; though perhaps not necessarily utterly destroyed. And although there are indications that toward the end of the Present Dispensation the Papacy may regain some of its lost prestige, yet, in all probability, it will never be entirely regained unless it be for a brief period at the slaying of the two witnesses as described in chapter 11:7-12.

THE JUDGMENT ON THE WORSHIPERS OF THE BEAST. Vs. 9–11.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

11. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

9, 10. **And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation.** The beast and his image and his mark have already been considered in the preceding chapter. From the fall of the ecclesiastical organization which remained the continued representative of the beast under the name Babylon in the preceding verse, the prophetic view proceeds to notice the judgments upon his worshipers; whose wicked idolatry and oppression has so incurred the righteous judgments of God that the wine of his wrath is represented as poured out undiluted into the cup of his indignation.—**And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.** Whether the punishment of the wicked in the future state will forever be in the presence of the angels and of the Lamb or not, is a question that is not material to our purpose here. But certainly their condemnation will be in the presence of the Lamb, who will be the judge, and of the angels, whom he will send forth, "And they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire" (Matt. 13: 41, 42). And their punishment will be approved as just by all intelligent beings.

11. **And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.** The worshipers of the beast regarded themselves as the true worshipers of God; but the proclamation of this angel—no doubt in harmony with the decision of the righteous Judge—shows that in the judgment they will be classed with the unbelieving and wicked;

for, as will more fully appear before we reach the end of this book, their final punishment is the same. But this final judgment of the worshipers of the beast is noticed here not only to show what it will be in the end, but, doubtless also, because under the greatly increased spiritual light consequent upon the publishing of the gospel to all nations, and the contrast between the false worship and the true, the true character of these worshipers will be made manifest and their final destiny, to some extent at least, become apparent; and in some sense, perhaps, significant judgments will begin to fall upon them before the final consummation is reached.

THE FAITHFUL LIFE AND BLESSED DEATH OF THE SAINTS. Vs. 12, 13.

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

12. **Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.** From presenting the judgment of the worshipers of the beast—the great antagonist of the saints—to its final consummation, the prophetic view now turns to notice the condition of the saints; whose patient endurance, steadfast adherence to the truth, and blessed death presents so striking a contrast to the terrible destiny and perpetual unrest of the worshipers of the beast. O how the great antichristian organization represented by the beast has tried the patient endurance of the saints! And how they have been ridiculed and blamed for being so strict in keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus! But the judgments that fall upon this corrupt so-called Christian organization, clearly show that the saints did right in separating from it, and strictly obeying God in the spirit and forms of worship.

13. **And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.** In the account of the future destiny of the worshipers of the beast, nothing is said about their works following them in a commendatory way; all the boasted merit of their good works, put into the treasury of the Church with the infinite merits of Jesus, sinks into nothingness at the judgment. But the good works of the

saints continue to bear fruit after their death, and doubtless, are also had in everlasting remembrance before God. But the special mention of the works of the saints indicates a period of especial Christian activity, which, no doubt, embraces the Missionary Period we have been considering, when, under the proclamation of the gospel, the kingdom of Christ shall begin effectually to prevail over the idolatrous systems of religion and the hostile powers of the world; and, in all probability, the judgments just noticed will begin to fall upon the worshipers of the beast; whose corrupt system of religion—bearing the semblance of Christian—made the work of the saints much more trying and laborious than it otherwise would have been. But they rest from their labors, and in the light of the judgments upon the worshipers of the beast, it plainly appears they did right. Therefore in this sense also their memory is blessed, and their works do follow them,—they are not only fruitful, but also properly estimated and appreciated.

THE SON OF MAN AND THE ANGEL REAPING. VS. 14–20.

14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

16 And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

19 And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20 And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

14. **And I looked, and behold a white cloud.** This cloud reminds us of the cloud of the Ascension of Christ, and of the "clouds of heaven" in which he shall come again "with power and great glory."—**And upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle.** The crown is the symbol of royalty, and the sickle the instrument for reaping the fruits of the earth. Therefore, the place occupied, the

sign of royalty, and the instrument of reaping, show that the Son of man is in a position of power and readiness to go forth and gather in the fruits of the earth.

15. **And another angel came out of the temple.** In the arrangment of the heaven described in this book, the temple was, perhaps, at the base of the throne (compare chapter 7:15 with Is. 6:1), and in the Jewish economy it was the place where God especially put his name and met his people; therefore, this angel may be regarded as commissioned and sent out from the throne.—**Crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.** We must not conclude from these short expressions that they represent a short work; for, most likely, the scope of the visions of this chapter beginning with verse 6, in point of time takes in all that part of the Present Dispensation which begins with the publishing of the gospel to all nations.

16. **And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.** Most likely the period of time under consideration here is the reaping time of the earth as compared with the preceding period of trial and of limited extent over which the Christian religion prevailed. Large numbers are now gathered into the earthly department of the kingdom of Christ, and thence transferred into the heavenly one. And doubtless this represents this ingathering down to the end of the Present Dispensation, when the saints under the present order of things shall all be gathered home into the garner of Christ.

17. **And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.** The Son of man in reaping gathers in those who belong to his kingdom, but there is another class yet to be reaped; and this angel comes out of the temple, prepared and doubtless commissioned from the throne, to do this work.

18. **And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire.** The mention of an altar in this book points to persecution. In chapter 8:3-5, an angel appears at the golden altar before the throne with a censer and much incense to offer with the prayers of the saints, who, having filled the censer with fire of the altar, casts it into the earth; "and there were voices and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake." And from this imagery we concluded that when the hostile powers of earth should lay the

hand of oppression and persecution upon the saints, they would cry unto God, and their prayers, like the smoke of the incense, would ascend up before him; and in response his judgments, like the fire of the altar, would raise up some commotion or counter-movement to avert the persecuting power from destroying them. We need not suppose this angel's work was finished when the supremacy passed from the hostile powers of earth to those which were friendly to the kingdom of Christ; for Satan was not yet bound, neither were these hostile powers wholly destroyed. Now, may not this be the same angel whose "power over fire" consists in staying or averting fiery persecution as above indicated? But now we are coming to the end of the Present Dispensation when, according to the purposes of God, all persecution shall cease through the binding of Satan, and the destruction of all hostile organizations and combinations that he has formed in the earth; therefore the work of this angel being completed at the altar, it may be said he came out from it **and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.**

19. **And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.** "The great winepress of the wrath of God" is a highly figurative expression which represents the intensity of God's wrath. This "vine of the earth," whose tendrils have wound around everything within their grasp, represents the great anti-christian organizations and combinations of earth, whose "vine is the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps" (Deut. 32:32, 33). And now the clusters of this evil vine are fully ripe, and are gathered and cast into the great winepress of the wrath of God.

20. **And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.** The "city" is doubtless the holy city, the abode of the saints; and the winepress being "trodden without the city" indicates the security of the saints within in this overwhelming destruction. In chapter 19, where this same event under much more extended prophetic imagery is more fully and if possible more impressively represented, we learn that "the

winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" is trodden by him whose "name is called the Word of God;" who also leads "the armies which were in heaven" to complete and final victory in the great conflict with "the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies." The sea of blood spreading out from this winepress to such vast extent in every direction, intensely portrays the magnitude of the destruction of the antichristian powers of earth. Thus these intense prophetic delineations of the events at or near the close of the Present Dispensation, preparatory to the Millennial Period which immediately follows, repeated over and over again, indicate that great and violent changes will then take place; but the particular manner of their accomplishment we may not now definitely know; this we must leave for the future to disclose.

CHAPTER XV.

THE SEVEN LAST PLAGUES, AND THE SEA OF GLASS. Vs. 1–8.

1 And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

5 And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

6 And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

1. **And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the**

wrath of God. From the closing scenes of the Present Dispensation, we turn back a third time to the early part of it, to trace its history as represented under the vials, or bowls—as the word is uniformly rendered in the Revised Version,—called here "the seven last plagues." If we compare the account of the pouring out of each of these vials with the sounding of the trumpet of the corresponding number, we shall see a striking similarity. In the first six, the same object or objects are affected by each vial as were affected or brought into notice by the corresponding trumpet; and while the seventh trumpet, as we have explained it, represented the supremacy of power friendly to the kingdom of Christ, yet the retributive judgments upon the enemies of Christ's kingdom which follow the sounding of it, are strikingly similar to those which follow the seventh vial. Therefore, from such considerations, we conclude that each of the trumpets—excepting the seventh, as above stated—brought into notice some great power adverse to Christianity; and the corresponding vial is a last judgment upon that power. Hence, we must not look upon these seven last plagues as a group of judgments at the end of the Present Dispensation; but as the last judgment on the power upon which each one falls respectively, that contributes to its final complete extinction or subjugation. Hence, the judgments under these vials are more or less synchronous with the events that take place under the trumpets, for they are respectively the last as to the power on which each one falls; that is, under it the hostile power is either wholly subdued by the Lamb, or wholly extinguished; and this retributive work is being accomplished as from time to time, power after power is subdued or extinguished all along through the greater part of the Present Dispensation; until at its close, all hostile power is completely destroyed.

2. **And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.** Before the Jewish Tabernacle there was a "laver of brass," and before the Temple, a "molten sea;" and in chapter 4:6, there appears a like arrangement in the heavenly sanctuary described there; for it is said, "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal." Probably the sea of this passage is the same one, which here appears of ample dimensions for these victorious saints to stand upon. The

beast, his image, mark, and number of his name, are explained in chapter 13. The beast is thus minutely described here so as to fully represent all his forms and characteristics. Doubtless the design of this passage, introductory to the pouring out of the vials, is to show the security of God's people while these judgments are taking place. Though they may suffer from this hostile power in this life, yet not one of them is finally overwhelmed and lost. But as the ages pass on, they are continually being gathered to this place of safety and joy; where, "having the harps of God," they may participate in the praises of heaven.

3. **And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God.** "The song of Moses" was a song of deliverance from the oppressive Egyptian power, through its overthrow at the Red Sea. There is a peculiar fitness in this song being sung during the pouring out of these vials, for they are God's judgments upon the great powers that so long and cruelly oppress his people. And as one after another of these powers is humbled and subdued under these judgments, with good reason may the saints strike their harps and lift up their voices anew in the strains of this song of deliverance, so repeatedly applicable to these occasions.—**And the song of the Lamb.** "The song of the Lamb" is the song of salvation through his redeeming work, through which they are safely brought to this place of security and felicity.—**Saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.** The great and marvelous works of God referred to here are his works of redemption and especially those in relation to the deliverance of the saints from the hostile powers of earth, and his marvelous judgments upon these powers, all of which show him to be "King of saints;" or perhaps better as in the Revised Version, "King of the ages," that is, Eternal King—King for ever, and King over all.

4. **Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.** As these judgments progress, men are led more and more to fear and glorify the Lord, seeing his holiness as shown in his righteous acts.—**For all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.** During the first part of the Present Dispensation, we have seen that the earth is largely filled with hostile power; but these judgments subdue that power so that the gospel may be published to all nations; and thus God's

judgments are made manifest, and all nations come and worship before him.

5. **And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened.** "After that" refers to the order in which these visions appeared to John, and not to the order of their fulfillment; for, doubtless, in their fulfillment, like many of the visions in this book, they would be partly if not wholly contemporary. In the arrangement of the various objects in the heaven described in this book, as we have already seen, the temple occupied a position at the base of the throne, extending, perhaps, a little forward of the foot of it. "The tabernacle of the testimony" or witness—as the latter word is sometimes rendered—was perhaps the inner sanctuary, that, in the Jewish Temple, contained the ark of the covenant and the tables of stone, which in this vision appears to be opened as well as the temple as usually opened. Perhaps this opening of the "temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven," was not only that the seven angels might be seen coming out of the temple, but more especially to show that through his judgments under these vials, God is about to subdue the hostile powers of earth, and thus open up the way for the establishment of his kingdom in the world in the fulfillment of the testimony of his Word.

6. **And the seven angels came out of the temple, having the seven plagues.** The temple was the visible dwelling place of God among men. And according to Isaiah 6:1—to which we have referred before upon the mention of the temple in this book—the train of the Enthroned One filled the temple; and therefore, these angels came forth from the immediate presence of the throne, no doubt commissioned and sent forth from it.—**Clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.** The "pure and white linen," doubtless, represents the righteousness of the mission on which they are sent by the pure and righteous One, who decrees these righteous judgments. And the "golden girdles" remind us of a like one, worn in a like manner by the Lord himself, as described in chapter 1:13.

7. **And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.** The four beasts, who are regarded as the representatives of creation, are first mentioned in chapter 4, where they are represented

as taking part in the worship before the throne—perhaps responsively—with the twenty-four elders, who are regarded as the representatives of redemption. Now the question arises, What is the significance of one of these four beasts giving these vials of wrath to the seven angels? To which it may be replied: The judgments under these vials, from an earthly point of view, pertain to creation, rather than to redemption; to time, rather than to eternity. While they are chiefly intended to affect men, yet they are impenitent men; and men in the present state of existence, as physical beings, are an important part of the physical creation. And then, they are not so much designed to fall upon men as single individuals, as upon combinations or associations of men which represent hostile power; and such combinations or associations only exist in the present life of men. Therefore, there is a peculiar fitness in one of these four beasts presenting these vials to the seven angels. And then again, these representatives of creation are in full sympathy with the righteous indignation of the ever living God against the wickedness that mars the fair face of creation, and stands in the way of the progress of his kingdom; through the establishment of which, creation is to be restored again to its pristine purity.

8. **And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.** There seems to be an allusion here to the Jewish Tabernacle, when, "A cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation" (Ex. 40:34, 35). And also to the Temple, when, "The cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (I Kings 8:10, 11). These were majestic and awe-inspiring expressions of God's approval of the efforts of men to honor and serve him. But now, men have been disobeying him and serving the great adversary, and his wrath is kindled against them beyond reconciliation; therefore the intercessory ministrations of men, being unavailing, are thus impressively represented as obstructed while these righteous judgments are being executed.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE FIRST VIAL. Vs. 1, 2.

1 And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.

1. **And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.** From the last verse of the preceding chapter we learn that the temple was exclusively "filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power;" therefore, the voice expressed a command from God himself.

2. **And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and upon them which worshipped his image.** As explained under chapter 15:1, each of these vials represents a final judgment upon the power or powers that were represented under the trumpet of corresponding number. And according to the interpretation of chapter 8:7, the first trumpet relates to the Roman Empire, representing it more especially in the process of its disruption into ten kingdoms as foretold in Daniel, chapters 2 and 7, and in chapter 17 of this book; therefore the word "earth" may be understood here as designating the Roman Empire, a sense not unusual as we have seen in this book. And as this was the last hostile form in the national life of the Empire we may expect this "noisome and grievous sore" to fall upon it in this disrupted form, which we have traced under the first trumpet and where we have also identified these kingdoms. And "the mark of the beast" and "his image" have also been noticed in chapter 13:14-17.

For centuries the beast and these kingdoms had been endeavoring to "wear out the saints of the Most High," had been at "war with the Lamb;" and although, as prophesied by Daniel (chapter 7:8), three of these kingdoms should be "plucked up by the roots," yet as they were subdued by hostile power that took their place, up to the time of the Reformation the hostile power arrayed against the kingdom of Christ was undiminished. But at the time of the Reformation, the stone seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his dream began to smite these kingdoms; for as Daniel says (chapter 2:44),

"In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

This "noisome and grievous sore" is described as "A wound whence blood or matter flows; an ulcer, sore." It is not an immediately fatal wound or sore, but one under which life may be prolonged for a considerable length of time, but with continually wasting strength. We may regard this "sore" as beginning at the Reformation and more or less gradually subduing these kingdoms to the Lamb through the rise of Protestant power as represented by the coming of the "mighty angel" of chapter 10, and the rise and twofold testimony of the two witnesses of chapter 11. And in chapter 17:14, it is said, "The Lamb shall overcome them"; where more will be said on this point. There seems to be a peculiar significance in this noisome and grievous sore falling upon "men". For it is the hostility of the rulers and people as individuals rather than the national life of these kingdoms that is to be destroyed; and they are to become Christian in some such sense as the two witnesses as nations are Christian, and doubtless the change will enhance their national greatness. Upon the resignation of the imperial power by the Emperor, Francis II., in 1806, the single national life of the beast came to an end. And the hostile power of his "image", the Papacy, is now so far held in restraint as to permit the dissenting Christian sects to circulate the Bible, publish its truths, and plant churches in nearly every place in these kingdoms.

THE SECOND VIAL. V. 3.

3 And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.

3. **And the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea.** According to our interpretation of the second trumpet (chapter 8: 8, 9), by the expression, "A great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea," etc., the conquests of the Northern Barbarians in the Roman Empire West were represented. By these conquests the western third part of the Empire was destroyed, or rather, "As it were wounded to death" in the year 476,—though later the wound was healed again as stated in chapter 13:3; and for three or four centuries from this date, its territories were occupied by various barbarian nations, whose tribal relations, forms of government and nomadic habits, during the earlier part of this time at least,

enabled them to move in national bodies into any territory they might conquer and desire to occupy.—**And it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living soul died in the sea.** In this book blood is a symbol of death, and when applied to nations it denotes national death. Every kingdom formed by these barbarian conquerors on the ruins of the Empire has long since passed out of existence,—is nationally dead. The period of their existence was a tumultuous and changeful one; during which these various nations would expand or contract the territorial area occupied by them, or rise and fall, accordingly as they pressed other nations by their superior power, or were themselves oppressed by the superior power of opposing nations. On these accounts it is very difficult to fix on any definite date when the rule of these nations ended and that of the modern nations that now occupy these territories began; but, if we are not misinformed, historians generally consider the period of transition from the rule of the former to that of the latter as having taken place during the eighth and ninth centuries.

THE THIRD VIAL. V. 4.

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

4. **And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters.** Under the third trumpet, "There fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters" (chapter 8:10, 11); and this, according to our interpretation, represented the rise of the Saracens, who conquered a large part of the Asiatic and all of the African provinces of the Roman Empire. And, as we understand it, this vial is the judgement upon this people.—**And they became blood.** Again we have the symbol blood, which, when applied to nations, denotes national death. The Saracen Empire and all the civil factions into which it became divided, as independent governments, are wholly extinct; and the dominion over its territories has wholly passed into other hands. The extinction of the caliphate of Bagdad in the year 1258, by the Moguls, during the reign of Holagou, the grandson of the great Genghis Khan, is generally regarded as the termination of the Saracen Empire. But according to our plan of interpretation, the Mohammedan power in Spain would form one of the group of Mohammedan powers into

which the Saracen Empire became divided; and the extinction of this power did not take place until the year 1492.

The whole history of the Saracen Empire from the death of Mohammed (A. D. 632), may be briefly summed up as a century of brilliant conquest; succeeded by a century of stationary, but rather precarious, greatness; and this followed by another century of disruption and dismemberment, through the rebellion and usurpation of the provincial governors; and this again was followed by more than three centuries of decline in the East, and five and a half in the West, before the end was reached at the dates given above. Of the end of the Mohammedan power in the West, the modern writer, W. Irving, in his reflections at the palace of the Alhambra, found in one of our school readers, says : "Never was the annihilation of a people more complete, than that of the Spanish Moors. Where are they? Ask the shores of Barbary and its desert places. The exiled remnant of their once powerful empire, disappeared among the barbarians of Africa, and ceased to be a nation."

THE TESTIMONY OF THE ANGEL OF THE WATERS. VS. 5-7.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty true and righteous are thy judgments.

5. **And I heard the angel of the waters say.** It seems, this angel appears to John in the vision as having some especial commission of oversight, of scrutiny, or of inquiry in relation to the waters, or peoples, of the two preceding vials, which were composed of many differenet tribes or nations.—**Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus.** Thus it is asserted that it is through the righteous judgment of the Everliving One that these hostile powers are annihilated, notwithstanding its being done through human means operating under human pretexts.

6. **For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.** While in the destruction of the Civil State, the Northern Barbarians permitted its counterpart, the Ecclesiastical State, to survive—perhaps fearing no danger from it—yet as Pagans they were hostile to Christianity. And their conquests and rule brought upon Christ-

endom the political, the literary, and the religious darkness of the Middle Ages, which so effectively contributed to the apostasy of the Christian Church, and prepared the way for the subsequent terrible persecutions which took place through this apostasy. And the Saracens, in propagating the Mohammedan faith, almost wholly extinguished the Christian religion from the larger portion of their dominions. Hallam says: "Death, slavery, tribute, to unbelievers, were the glad tidings of the Arabian prophet." And Gibbon tells us: "Within fifty years after the expulsion of the Greeks, a lieutenant of Africa informed the caliph that the tribute of the infidels was abolished by their conversion; and, though he sought to disguise his fraud and rebellion, his specious pretense was drawn from the rapid and extensive progress of the Mohammedan faith." From the consideration of such things as these, we may perceive that the baneful and calamitous effects of both these powers upon Christendom, is beyond our comprehension.

7. **And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments.** The mention of an altar in this book, generally seems to be in connection with some power through which the saints have been "slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." And these powers were of that hostile character; therefore, God's judgments in annihilating them are pronounced by this angel to be "true and righteous."

THE FOURTH VIAL. VS. 8, 9.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.

8. **And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.** At the sounding of the fourth trumpet, under the symbol of the third part of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars being smitten, and the day darkened, etc. (chapter 8:12), we had, as interpreted there, the Roman Empire continued in the Eastern or Greek Empire with greatly diminished luster; so much so that in the later part of its existence it sinks into one of the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire became divided. Here, under the figure of men scorched with fire, we have the blighting and wasting away of this Empire. Its rulers

and people seem to be groping in the bewilderment of the darkness that had fallen upon them; and hence, they fail to perceive the opportunities for preserving its greatness, or for retrieving it after it began to decline; and seemingly under cover of this darkness, the most terrible corruptions and crimes prevailed. And thus internally weakened, it became a prey to its enemies without; who, from time to time as by a gradual consuming fire, conquered its territories until nothing remained but its capital city, Constantinople, which, in 1453, was captured by the Turks; and this was the end of the Empire.

9. **And men were scorched with great heat.** When "scorched with great heat" men are enervated and unable to endure the activity and toil of which they are capable under a proper temperature; hence this is a figurative expression, as already intimated, which represents the enervated condition of the Empire under which it sinks into ruin.—**And blaspemed the name of God.** The Sun of Righteousness once shone upon the people who inhabited the territories comprised within this Empire in the primitive fervor and purity of the early days of the Christian religion. But in the darkness that fell upon this region as represented under the fourth trumpet, the Christian religion was also obscured and perverted; and consequently, instead of its radiant and invigorating beams, there was the enervating influence of their perverted form of religion, which, more and more, hardened the rulers and people in sin and crime, as if to avenge the misuse and perversion of the true light that once shone so brightly here. As a professedly Christian people, their national and individual life was professedly Christian; but their perversion of the truth, and their hostility to those who strictly adhered to it, was a contradiction to their profession, which, in a certain sense, was blasphemy before God. And then the use of the name of God in the worship of men unrepentant and guilty of the most enormous crimes, must also be blasphemy in the sight of a holy God.—**Which hath power over these plagues.** Had these people been truly loyal to God he could have averted "these plagues." As the Supreme Ruler of the nations of the earth, he could have warded off the calamitous attacks of Northern Barbarian, Saracen, Turk, or other enemy. But they had wickedly forfeited the mercy of God, and incurred his wrath; hence he does not exert his power to stay these plagues, but leaves these "men"

a prey to them.—**And they repented not to give him glory.** The sun of the Empire set upon a still impenitent people, although claiming to be Christian; yet as only nominally so, they were without any just sense of penitence before God, and therefore they could not "give him glory." And thus the existence of the Empire terminated in impenitence; and its conquerors were, if possible, a more blasphemous and wicked people.

THE FIFTH VIAL. Vs. 10, 11.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,
11 And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

10. **And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast.** According to our interpretation, the fifth trumpet represented the rise of the Papal Power (chapter 9:1-11); and this vial is the judgment upon it. In the early part of the Christian era "the seat of the beast" was in the Roman Empire, but upon its disruption a large share of the World-power it had exercised passed into the Papacy; and this now became the seat of the beast. —**And his kingdom was full of darkness.** "His kingdom" comprised all the nations that grew up out of the disrupted Roman Empire and accepted the teachings and acknowledged the power of the Papacy, together with their dependencies of like character in every part of the earth. When the Papacy descended from its heavenly position as a purely Christian organization, it came into the arena in which the nations were competing for the highest places of power; but the spiritual weapons it controlled gave it an immense advantage over the competing nations, and also enabled it to retain a standing wherever it had gained an entrance.

Under the fifth trumpet, the "darkness" is represented by the "smoke" out of which there came the large number of active officials enumerated there; and these were the representatives it used in promoting and retaining its power over the nations. And through these the Bible, the great source of light for the people, was withheld from them; a measure that was consummated at the council of Toulouse in the year 1229. And the political atmosphere of the nations was darkened by oppressive and proscriptive laws against everything that seemed to come in competition with what they claimed to be their exclusive rights. And the execution of

these laws, in some of their aspects so shocking to humanity, eventually produced a revulsion of feeling on the part of both rulers and people that largely contributed to the decline of this power.—

And they gnawed their tongues for pain. The primary meaning of the word rendered pain is work, hard work, toil; and then also the consequence of toil, distress of body or mind, pain, grief. Therefore the statement "they gnawed their tongues for pain" may be taken as an intense figurative expression that represents the painful work, the toil, the distress, inflicted upon the people of the nations included in this kingdom by the numerous and active officials described in the intense imagery of the fifth trumpet.

11. **And blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores.** "Because of" or on account of "their pains," as explained above, and "their sores." The word rendered "sores," as stated under the first trumpet, is defined as "A wound whence blood and matter flows; an ulcer, sore." Perhaps even the temporal power of the Papacy in the several nations was wounded through the rise of the Reformed sects prior to the Reformation, such as the Albigenses, the Waldenses, the Wickliffites, the Hussites, etc.; and especially so as the severe measures for their suppression instigated by this power became as a "sore" upon its name as viewed by the nations in more tolerant and enlightened later times. And certainly it was wounded by the Reformation and the subsequent rise of Protestant power as explained in connection with the coming and work of the "mighty angel" described in chapter 10, and also in connection with the prophesying of the two witnesses as described in chapter 11:3-6. And in resisting the rise and progress of these sects, raised up of God, and this heaven-sent power, as represented by the angel coming down from heaven, they "blasphemed the God of heaven" in the persons of his saints by their proscriptive and persecuting edicts issued for their destruction, and also by their attempts to destroy the power that God had raised up for the defense and advancement of his kingdom on the earth.—

And repented not of their deeds. They changed not their minds from their deeds, but continually held on to the same beliefs and deeds; although in the performance of such of their deeds as affected national affairs—which are more particularly under consideration here—they would be more or less under the restraint of

the respective nations wherein they had obtained a standing. The claim of infallibility stamps the Papacy with an unchangeable character; and the tenacious retention of the beliefs and doings that came into existence in the dark ages of the past may be an important part of the darkness indicated under this vial, and certainly contributes to its continuance into the future. Therefore, while undoubtedly God has a people in the churches, yea perhaps many who exercise genuine "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," we have good reason to conclude from the prophecies of this book that the power at their head will always be hostile to the kingdom of Christ, and that the "darkness" that falls upon it under this vial, and the impenitence indicated here, will remain upon it to the end of its existence, as more fully described further on in this book.

THE SIXTH VIAL. V. 12.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

12. **And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates.** Under the sixth trumpet, by the losing of the four angels bound in the river Euphrates (chapter 9:13-19), there was represented the conquests and dominion of four great Asiatic powers or dynasties that approached Christendom by way of the Euphrates River: The Seljukan Turks, the Tartar or Mogul dynasty of Genghis Khan, and that of Tamerlane, and the Ottoman Turks. This vial is the judgment on these powers. Largely the dominion of each was extinguished by the one that followed next in order; but there were exceptions to this rule, principally for the reason that their conquests did not always embrace precisely the same territories; yet each one crossed the Euphrates and extended its conquests into Asia Minor. A statement, however brief, of the extinction of the dominion of each of these dynasties together with the various branches into which each became divided, would be too long for insertion here; for, excepting Arabia, at some period of their supremacy during a greater or less extent of time, their conquests and dominion extended over the vast area of territory stretching from the eastern confines of Germany and the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea on the west, to the Sea of China and the Bay of Bengal on the east; and from far up towards the north-

ern limits of Russia and Siberia on the north, to the Indian Ocean on the south. But, unless there may be representatives still remaining among the petty rulers of Tartar tribes in Central Asia, the first three of these great powers have entirely disappeared; and the last one, the Ottoman, is in a declining condition.—

And the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. For centuries the irruptions of the barbarous nations of Central Asia kept both Europe and Asia in a constant state of alarm. The unsettled condition of affairs while these were taking place was not conducive to the permanent establishment of the Christian religion among the nations of the east. These destructive streams of conquest, resulting in so much desolation and death and the rise and fall of so many nations, must be "dried up" and cease by the passing away of the extensive usurped dominion of these mighty dynasties. And instead of obtaining subsistence by plunder and rapine, the nations must settle down to a more stable condition of both national and individual life, and thus be prepared for the reception of the gospel of Christ.

We have a remarkable example of the preparation of "the way of the kings of the east" in the case of India. The great Tartar Empire established there in 1524 by Baber, a lineal descendant of the renowned Tamerlane, was just in that condition of decline at the beginning of the English conquests in that country to make its acquisition a comparatively easy task. And thus the first great mission field was prepared for the introduction of the gospel to the "kings of the east." And the acquisition of this field prepared the way for entrance into the surrounding nations still under the government of native rulers. But the hostility to the Christian religion on account of existing national systems of religion, was another great obstacle in the way of the "kings of the east" that must be "dried up"; the drying up of which is so intimately connected with the commencement and progress of the modern missionary work as to be inseparably connected with its history.

THE THREE UNCLEAN SPIRITS. VS. 13–16.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

13. **And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.** As related in chapter 12, "the dragon" is "that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan," that in being described as "having seven heads and ten horns" is represented as operating through the Roman Empire in persecuting the woman or the Christian Church. "The beast" as described in chapter 13:1–10, is most likely that hostile civil power that operated through the revived Roman Empire in making "war with the saints"; and which representatively is still continued in such hostile power as may yet remain in any of the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Empire. "The false prophet" as described in chapter 19:20, seems to be another name for the antichristian ecclesiasticism that grew out of the Roman Empire as more fully represented by the second beast of chapter 13 (vs. 11–18).

Though in order that the Seer may recognize these "three unclean spirits" they appear to him in a material form, of a low type perhaps to correspond with their character and purpose; yet they seem to be represented as spirits because their work as it progresses is largely or wholly unperceived in the general public view. And as their work is mainly done by means of language in transmitting communications from their originals to the kings of the earth, they are represented as coming out of their mouths.

14. **For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world.** These spirits seem to instigate the continuance of the miraculous and deceptive work of the originals whence they came, as more fully described in various places in this book, but especially in chapters 12 and 13. Most likely their work pertaining to the kings of the earth is mainly done through the usual channels of diplomatic international communication.—**To gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.** The especial mission of these unclean spirits seems to be to combine the antichristian governments of earth in hostile array against those which are on the side and under the protection of God Almighty.

"The battle" is not a single contest but that prolonged war waged for centuries between the powers here represented, and which in the human point of view has been attended with varying success. For from their rise it has been the policy of the powers represented by "the dragon", "the beast", and the "false prophet" to intermeddle in national affairs for the purpose of increasing to the greatest possible extent their own power and influence on the earth. In our progress through this book, we have had occasion to notice that frequently in the great contests among the nations, "kings of the earth" have to a greater or less extent been combined against the interests of the kingdom of Christ as promoted by the Christian governments of the earth. Therefore we may reasonably conclude that the coming forth and work of these unclean spirits began with the rise into maturity of the powers represented by their originals, although the prophetic view here seems to be mainly fixed upon their last effort now attended with such fair prospects of success.

15. **Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.** The coming of the Lord in this connection is not in his own distinctive person but in the Christian forces that successfully contend for supremacy with the kings of the earth. The enemy in their powerful combination on the one hand and the unwatchful and carelessly appareled Christians on the other, are two parties to which this coming of the Lord may be like that of a thief. When the three unclean spirits succeed in gathering the kings of the earth together, in a human point of view, their power may seem invincible, and for a time may be attended with important successes; and to them and their subjects the sudden raising up of superior forces that wrest from them their power might seem like the unexpected coming of a thief.

But in connection with the destruction of this hostile civil power the Lord's words here addressed to Christians seem to imply that the long prevalent worldly ritualistic forms of religion that have largely or wholly obscured the righteousness of Christ, which is the true Christian's spiritual apparel, will now come into consideration and be destroyed along with the civil power that has upheld them. And to Christians of this class the coming of the Lord to destroy civil power and religious organizations popularly regarded

as Christian will be like the coming of a thief. And such Christians will be unprepared for his coming and will suffer loss; while the watchful Christian clothed in the righteousness of Christ will be "blessed", because loyally watching and fully prepared for his coming and for whatever events may attend it.

16. **And he gathered them together unto a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.** In the Revised Version "he" is rendered "they" and relates to the three unclean spirits for its antecedent, and "Armageddon" is rendered "Har-Magedon". It is thought that this name is used to designate the place near the city and waters of Megiddo rendered memorable by the defeat of the vast host of Jabin king of the Canaanites under Sisera by Deborah and Barak upon descending from Mount Tabor with only ten thousand men (Judges 4:14–16). This locality at the eastern border of the great plain of Esdraelon has been the scene of so many important battles that it may be regarded as a conspicuous battle field of the Holy Land. Therefore this name may be used to represent some place which, when the time comes, will be conspicuous and definite. And the mention of the place of gathering emphatically indicates the certainty and the importance of the event.

In all probability along here we are considering differing aspects of the events foretold in chapter 11:7–13. Most likely in connection with the gathering together of these kings of the earth the two witnesses are slain; and then on the other hand, as a result of the "great earthquake" that takes place in conneetion with the restoring of the two witnesses to life again and the fall of "the tenth part of the city," they suffer a defeat. And finally their destruction is fully consummated under the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial, which probably are largely if not wholly contemporaneous in time, and under which Christian power rises into undisputed supremacy upon all the earth.

THE SEVENTH VIAL. Vs. 17–21.

17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

20 And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

17. **And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air.** As we have interpreted it, under each of the first six trumpets there appears some great power on the earth hostile to the kingdom of Christ; and under each of the six vials already poured out, the power that appeared under the trumpet of the corresponding number is smitten so as to cause its decline and fall. But under the seventh trumpet, Christian power comes into supremacy; and in connection with this supremacy, God's judgments under the seventh vial result in the final destruction of all power hostile to his kingdom. Under the judgments of the first six vials, hostile power is so smitten again and again that it would seem very likely to be subdued from the earth; but the work of the three unclean spirits in gathering the kings of the earth "to the battle of that great day of God Almighty," seems to inspire the ever vigilant enemy with a new prospect of regaining his declining supremacy. But this prospect, perhaps for a time so fair, is blighted by the pouring out of the seventh vial into the air,—an element universally distributed over the earth,—which, no doubt, is intended to represent the universally distributed judgments that fall upon the universally extended kingdom of Satan upon the earth, who is called "The prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).—

And there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. "The temple" and "the throne" as seen in the Apocalyptic heaven of this book, are in such close proximity as to seem nearly or quite parts of the same structure; and this structure is the highest seat of power that comes within the range of the quickened perception of the inspired Seer; hence the tremendous significance of this voice. Although this voice comes forth at the beginning of this seventh vial period, yet it may be said, "It is done," because this is the last of these "vials full of the wrath of God." All have been poured out. And then again, under this last one, the purposes and decrees of God pertaining to the end of Satan's kingdom on the earth are to be fully executed; and the move-

ments in human affairs that are to effect this result have undoubtedly already begun their progressive course, and Satan himself is soon to be in captive's chains. And then again, the question arises, May not this voice also represent some inspiration or enduement that goes forth from the throne to the Christian forces of the earth that more effectively prepares them for the performance of their part—whatever that part may be—in consummating the destruction of the hostile array of power that confronts them?

18. **And there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.** Very likely these "voices, and thunderings, and lightnings" represent counsels and movements which God uses to cause fear and dissension in the camp at Armageddon, or among the rulers and peoples of the nations represented there. And this state of things probably brings on the great revolution or convulsion among the nations that is represented by this "great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth,"—the greatest in the annals of human history. It is significant that these same symbolic expressions occur after the sounding of the seventh trumpet, under which the supreme power of earth is represented as passing into the kingdom of Christ. And the judgments under this vial seem to be but a more full and specific account of those represented there; for in both cases it is the same power, operating in the same direction, and for the same purposes.

19. **And the great city was divided into three parts.** "The great city," here perhaps, as in chapter 11:8, is the figurative name of the Roman Empire as conceived still to be prolonged by such hostile World-power as may yet remain in any of the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Empire; whether this power be principally exercised by some one of these kingdoms, or it be more or less distributed through all the yet remaining ones. And now through this great convulsion, this power that has come down through so many succeeding centuries under varying outward forms is broken into three parts. But on what lines of disagreement, civil or religious, we are not informed. Yet of these kingdoms, in chapter 17:13 and 17, it is said: "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. . . For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their king-

dom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Now, in all probability, the words of God are fulfilled, and instead of agreement in their relation to the beast there is dissension. And in the connection just referred to the beast is being considered under his eighth or ecclesiastical head; therefore we may conclude that ecclesiastical questions are more or less involved in these divisions.—

And the cities of the nations fell. Giving to the word "cities" a figurative sense similar to that which we have given to "great city," and it may be regarded as representing the hostile civil power and the erroneous religious systems of the nations. And such now seems to be the relations of these surrounding nations to those included in the figurative great city that their hostile power, civil and religious, is involved in the dissensions and fall of this power in those nations. And thus the nations are prepared to "become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." And under his benignant reign they doubtless become more prosperous and happy than they were before.—

And great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath. "Great Babylon" seems to be the figurative name here used to designate that antichristian ecclesiasticism that was the counterpart of the civil World-power bequeathed to succeeding ages from the Roman Empire; of which the Papacy may be regarded as the leading form, but not the only one. In chapter 17:16, where this "Babylon the great" in her ultimate relation to these kingdoms is under consideration, we are told: "These shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." And the mournful description of her fall, in chapter 18, shows how completely these intense predictions shall be fulfilled.

20. **And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found.** As these impediments to the progress of the traveler by sea and by land are represented as disappearing, so every form of hostile power,—every impediment to the progress of the kingdom of Christ,—shall disappear through the effects of this great earthquake.

21. **And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.** The weight of a talent as given by different writers was fifty pounds or more. This great hail doubtless represents an emphatic divine retributive visitation that

accompanies the commotions or revolutions that are represented by the voices, and thunders, and lightnings, and the great earthquake, which more fully completes the overthrow of the hostile forces involved in these mighty convulsions.—**And men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.** This hail falls upon men, men who were at enmity with God in the various ways indicated in this book. And now instead of stopping in their hostile course and submissively and penitently acknowledging God's superior power in this visitation, it produces resentment and blasphemy; and thus they become more and more guilty before him.

And thus the vision leaves them awhile to return to an earlier point of time for the purpose of considering the harlot and the beast as described in the next chapter. And then as the point of time reached here is approached again in chapters 18 and 19, the destruction of "Babylon the great" and of all antichristian power, so abruptly broken off here, is resumed again, and represented as entirely completed under the impressive and graphic visions of these two chapters.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE HARLOT AND THE BEAST. Vs. 1–6.

1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters;

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication:

5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

1. **And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.** From events towards the close of the Present Dispensation we return again to an earlier point of time to consider "the great whore that sitteth upon many waters," and also "the beast that carrieth her." The descriptions which follow show that the beast represents the Roman Empire, which in its later form, as considered in this chapter, continues to be represented in the line of the Ecclesiastical State or the Papacy as its eighth head; of which more will be said further on. And the woman represents the order of churches attached to this head as distributed throughout the nations side by side, it may be, with the churches of other denominations. She is called a harlot because the church she represents recognizes an earthly potentate as its head in place of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom she thus becomes unfaithful; and she is therefore guilty of spiritual fornication. We are not told which of the seven this angel was, but there would be a peculiar fitness in his being the one that had the fifth vial, which was "poured out upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was filled with darkness;" the result of which, doubtless, lead on to this "judgment." In order more clearly and impressively to show her judgment the angel first gives a description "of the great whore," and also "of the beast that carrieth her." The "many waters" on which she sitteth as explained in verse 15, are the people and nations that in any degree embrace and support the church organization which she represents.

2. **With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication.** Instead of being true to Christ alone, through the authority at the head of this Church she has made it a chief object to ally herself with the kings of the earth, not only for her own protection and extension, but also for the punishment, proscription, and death of those she might consider her rivals or her foes. To obtain the love and the chivalry of these kings for her own aggrandize-

ment and exaltation has been one of her cherished purposes; for this she has flattered and threatened; for their earthly treasures she has held out the hope of both earthly and heavenly ones.—**And the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.** She has not only ingratiated herself into the favor of "the kings of the earth," but also into that of the inhabitants of the earth,—the common people. The "wine of her fornication" is a highly figurative expression used to indicate such practices, such beliefs, and such objects of worship as come between the soul and Christ and make it insensible to its true spiritual need; and to these her worshipers cling with a tenaciousness that makes them indifferent if not really hostile to any effort to point out their erroneousness and danger. Her high pretensions of sanctity and power, and her formal awe-inspiring ritual of worship, fascinate and bewilder. The belief that the treasures of redemption are placed at her disposal for her obedient followers, tends to lull them into a spiritual slumber that leaves the issues of future life and death in her hands. And thus Christ is but dimly recognized in the background by her worshipers, if recognized at all.

3. **So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness.** Going into "the wilderness" takes the prophet away fron the central seat of power into the outlying nations represented by "the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth," for the purpose of viewing her character and doings there. Most likely this "wilderness" includes every nation where she has obtained a place to sit, whether large or small, or whether the nation be regarded as Papal, Protestant, or as of some other religious belief.—**And I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.** No matter whether we turn to the Roman Empire when Paganism was the national religion, or after the Papacy had gained the ascendancy, we find grounds for the "names of blasphemy;" for the emperors constantly required and received divine honors, and the popes claimed powers and prerogatives that belong to Deity only. In other respects this beast is described further on. Perhaps we should bear in mind that this personage is a woman still, although so untrue to her Lord by reason of her attachment to the corrupt antagonistic beast which is so detestable to him; yet as appears from chapter 18:4, he has a people in the organization which she represents; and therefore,

doubtless, in some respects, he still retains a loving relation to the individual churches in which his people are found.

4. **And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls.** This costly array of apparel and adornments could only be procured through her companionship with the great men of the earth, among whom were emperors and kings. And truly these have bestowed upon this church organization princely favors and gifts. There have been times when she has possessed nearly half the wealth of extensive kingdoms; but, passing this by, her popes, bishops, priests, and other high officers, have ample and sometimes princely revenues; and she has been able to secure magnificent places of worship, and enrich them with statues and paintings and other costly and attractive appurtenances of worship.—**Having a Golden cup in her hand full of abomination and filthiness of her fornication.** This "cup" doubtless represents the false doctrines and idolatrous worship adopted in her apostasy from God, and the terrible crimes that resulted from her unholy alliance with the rulers of the earth.

5. **And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth.** This "mystery" has already been noticed, especially in chapter 13:18. That it is a mystery is shown by the attention it has received in the many investigations of its character, and in the difficulty of explaining it so that men will recognize it and place the right estimate upon it. No other organization in all history has so mysterious a character. Venerable at first as the pure and simple primitive Church, herself suffering trial and persecution; then the companion and care of imperial and royal rulers; and then again reigning over the kings of the earth, and full of corruption, violence, and blood. She was the first great almost universal corrupter of the Christian religion; and therefore, "the mother" of similar corruptions that followed her own.

6. **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.** The woman "drunken" gives an idea of the great quantity of the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus shed, and of her insensibility to the pain and suffering unjustly inflicted, and of her own enormous criminality. If not drunken, how could she who claimed to be God's favored channel for the transmission of the blessings of redemption to men

be stained with such bloody guilt?—**And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.** This "admiration" was not necessarily a pleasing sensation as the English word would imply; but rather wonder, astonishment, surprise, perhaps in contemplation of her relation to the beast, and of the different phases of her pretended and real character, and also of her insatiate thirst for the blood of the saints.

THE BEAST DESCRIBED. VS. 7–10.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

8 The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was and is not, and yet is.

9 And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space.

7. **And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.** The angel's explanation of "the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her," is also in somewhat figurative language, hard to be fully understood; but without it, and from only what has already been said, it might be very difficult satisfactorily to identify the objects represented by these symbolical figures,—the woman and the beast. And besides, much additional information in relation to the objects or organizations represented is given in the angel's explanation.

8. **The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.** This beast undoubtedly represents that mighty dominion that in its first form was exercised through Rome's temporal supremacy, and in its later form as considered in this connection through her ecclesiastical supremacy. From his point of view in the wilderness where he has been shown the wonderful harlot in later times, the Seer could look back and truly say the Roman Empire "was, and is not;" for as a single civil power its dominion has entirely passed away. And from his point of view when writing this book, he could also truly say Rome's ecclesiastical power "shall ascend;" for her

more widely extended ecclesiastical dominion was yet to come. Or if this prophetic view of the beast was taken at that important point of time when the imperial power was transferred from the East to the West in the year 800, the same might verily be said of the old Roman Empire; while the Papacy was then just beginning conspicuously to "ascend" into that position of dominion through the exercise of that international ecclesiastical power that has been the wonder of later times. And while in one view this ecclesiastical dominion is the offspring of Rome's temporal dominion, yet in another and more important view it is the result of that Satanic agency so often foretold in the New Testament that should lead the Christian Church into apostasy; hence it is said to "ascend out of the bottomless pit," and to "go into perdition."—

And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is. All through the prolonged dominion of the varied power represented by this beast, those whose names were written in the book of life have had more or less correct views of its impious character. While to those that dwell upon the earth whose names were not so written,—most likely composed largely if not wholly of its own subjects and adherents,—it appears a wonderful power; a power worthy of being diligently sustained and assiduously perpetuated. And thus the form of this power that "yet is" is very likely to be transmitted and revered until its end shall come as so impressively foretold in chapters 18 and 19 of this book.

9. **And here is the mind which hath wisdom.** Here is an opportunity for the deepest and most profound penetration of the human mind in order to discern the real objects represented by this woman and the beast, and to understand their true character. A strange sight indeed, representing a strange combination of worldly and spiritual things! A similar expression is found in chapter 13; 18, where this same beast is being considered, but in a different point of view.—**The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.** This, no doubt, is a reference to the seven hills on which Rome was built. But the woman has been represented as sitting upon the beast; therefore the dwelling place of the beast and of the woman as connected with the beast, is thus located in the Seven-Hilled City.

10. **And there are seven kings.** This is another explanation of the seven heads.—**Five are fallen, and one is.** Perhaps the most simple and the best explanation of this is to consider these seven kings or heads as representing the different forms of government under which the vast dominion of the Seven-Hilled City had grown up and was prolonged, viz: kings, consuls, decemvirs, tribunes, dictators, and emperors. The latter being the one that "is."—**And the other is not yet come.** The last real form of the Roman Empire was that which followed the transference of the imperial power from the Byzantine line of emperors to Charles I., the first in the new Western line, but reckoned as sixty-eighth in the regular line from Augustus; who was crowned at Rome by Pope Leo III., in the year 800. And thereafter the Roman Empire followed this new Western line, which later was called the Holy Roman Empire. As we have regarded this Empire as being represented by the first beast of chapter 13, its relation to the old Empire, and its conspicuous postion in the group of nations that in time grew up about it, have been noticed in that connection; therefore it is needless to repeat here, what has already been said there.—

And when he cometh, he must continue a short space. This "short space" terminated when Francis II. resigned the imperial power on the 6th of August 1806, which, counting from the year 800, was one thousand and six years. Or if we go back to the healing of the deadly wound as explained in chapter 13, it would be about twelve hundred and sixty years. But in this connection the former is the preferable reckoning. To man whose life is reckoned by so few years this may seem like a long rather than a short space, but to him whose existence extends through an immeasurable eternity such periods are verily but short spaces.

THE EIGHTH HEAD DESCRIBED. V. 11.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

11. **And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth.** Upon the passing away of the Roman Empire as a single civil power as stated in the preceding verse, its universal dominion is pepetuated largely by the Ecclesiastical State that has grown out of it. And this now becomes the eighth head or form of this long extended dominion.—**And is of the seven.** That is, this eighth head

originates from the seven heads of the beast that have just been spoken of. While it need not be claimed that the seven heads enumerated above represent all the varying forms of Roman government, yet they do include the principal forms. And these taken as a whole were of such a character as to produce such a condition of things as would be favorable to the growth of that vast ecclesiastical power wielded by the Papacy. If the Roman power had been continuously exercised under any single stable form of civil government, it never would have allowed the ecclesiastical to rise above the civil power,—it never would have permitted its citizens to assume an allegiance to the Ecclesiastical State that was regarded as having the precedence to their allegiance to the Civil State in case of conflict between the two.

While the Ecclesiastical State grew up under the last two of these seven heads only, yet the previous heads furnished a language and customs or usages that as occasion favored could be appropriated and incorporated into the new system of power. And these last two heads presented such a variation of power running through so great a length of time as to give ample opportunities for the development of this later power. The removal of the imperial government from Rome to Constantinople, and the absence of any civil ruler of high rank there during the Exarchate, relieved the Papacy of any serious restraints upon its efforts to increase its own power; so that after the establishment of the new Western Empire in the year 800, it could successfully cope with its emperors and the rulers of the surrounding kingdoms that grew out of the disrupted Empire for a supremacy of power. And this power now extends into all the nations of the earth in which its worshipers and adherents dwell.—**And goeth into perdition.** No benign change comes over this last form of power. While the kingdoms that grew out of the Roman Empire are ultimately overcome by the Lamb and subdued unto himself, as will soon appear, this power will hold out hostile to its end. And that end is perdition as so wofully portrayed further on in this book. And if we take the word "perdition" as relating to future destiny, then it is plainly indicated that under this head the beast occupies an especial spiritual province of action, for otherwise it could not consistently be said of him, "and goeth into perdition."

THE TEN HORNS DESCRIBED. VS. 12-17.

12 And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

12. **And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet.** As the power of the Roman Empire declined, it reappeared in three main directions: In the new Western Empire, which above we have called the seventh head of the beast; in the Ecclesiastical State or Papacy, which we have called the eighth head; and in the ten kingdoms of the disrupted Empire, as identified and described under the first trumpet, in chapter 8:9. These kings—or more properly kingdoms—did not exist in John's day, therefore he could truly say "which have received no kingdom as yet."—**But receive power as kings one hour with the beast.** These kingdoms grew out of the Empire upon its disruption, and for a time have what may be called a collateral sovereignty with it and with each other. But they did not all originate and rise into power at the same time, but rather more or less successively. If our list of these ten kingdoms given in the place above referred to is correct, the first three—the Northern Barbarian, the Saracen, and the Eastern Empire—passed the meridian of their power while some of the others were but in their earlier processes of formation; and later they were plucked up by the roots or destroyed, as foretold in chapter 7 of the book of Daniel.

While these kings "receive" this power through favoring opportunity doubtless by divine permission, yet on their part they take it or seize upon it, as the original word may also mean. The "one hour" can not be reduced to any definite time-limit, but varies according to the length of time during which each of these

kingdoms exercises hostile power in harmony with that of the beast. But in this connection these kingdoms themselves are the representatives of the civil World-power of the beast, therefore it is to the beast under his eighth head or ecclesiastical form that they conspicuously give their power; and thus both the civil and the ecclesiastical forms of World power, for a time, are in agreement in hostility to the Lamb. But if in the relation of these kingdoms to the beast there was lack of uniform cordiality and even instances of actual hostility, as in the Mohammedan part of these kingdoms, yet the general drift of their power like that of the beast was hostile to the kingdom of Christ. And while in its incipient and earlier stages of progress Barbarian conquerors and Byzantine emperors to a greater or less extent recognized and upheld it, it was between the later kingdoms and the Papacy that this relation became fully matured. And it is upon this conspicuous matured stage of its exercise that we might expect the brief prophetic view to be more particularly fixed, and yet the less conspicuous but essential earlier stage is an important part of the whole.

13. **These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.** While, as subsequent events have shown, they were often at variance with each other, yet in this one thing they were agreed,—they were of one mind in giving "their power and strength unto the beast." And thus it is indicated that they would make use of their power to uphold the interests of the beast,—military use of it if need be, as appears in the next verse.

14. **These shall make war with the Lamb.** War with the saints would be war with the Lamb on the principle given by himself in Matt. 25:40 and 45: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Doubtless this "war" represents the proscriptions and persecutions of the saints by these kingdoms through the influence of the beast for the purpose of sustaining the adopted form of religion.—**And the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.** And therefore, though he may suffer them to prevail for a time, yet he is stronger than they, and in the end will overcome. But as these kingdoms arose more or less successively, as noticed in the preceding verse, we may expect that likewise the overcoming work of the Lamb would be done more or less successively. And in the case of those kingdoms that should be "plucked up by the roots," we

might expect that their dominions would pass to such of the ten kingdoms as still remained, because these are the great dominant kingdoms of earth. And therefore in overcoming these, the Lamb subdues unto himself the entire territorial area at any time occupied by the whole together with an aggregate undiminished sum of power. And thus the whole is ultimately made Christian and fitted by the Lamb for the accomplishment of his purpose in destroying the harlot as predicted below, and also for the accomplishment of such other purposes as he may have in view in subduing the earth unto himself.—

And they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful. The Lamb does not choose to meet them in single personal conflict, but uses his chosen and faithful servants to meet his adversaries and defend his cause. And this implies toil and self denial in all the various lines of Christian effort, and, it may be, "garments rolled in blood" of battle fields. But what if in the conflict some of his faithful ones are transferred from the earthly service to the heavenly reward; his kingdom is but one whether his faithful ones serve him on earth or in heaven.

15. **And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth,**—as stated in verse 1,—**are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.** And these "peoples" truly have been many, for they not only include such as should be in the ten kingdoms proper, but also all in their colonies or other dependencies, or in independent nations that might spring from them, which still in any way retain their relation to the harlot.

16. **And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore.** This is indeed a great change in these kingdoms. In their war with the Lamb, he through the various available efforts and agencies used by his called and faithful servants overcomes them; and as this work progresses and they become his servants, and come under his better rule, they perceive the corruption and wickedness of the harlot.—**And shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.** This description of her ruin seems to imply a progressive work, First, "they shall make her desolate and naked;" then, "eat her flesh;" and finally, "burn her with fire." These statements seem to represent different stages of progress in her ruin: such as withholding from her their especial national support, and thus depriving her of her temporal

power and of her national revenues, which would leave her in these respects on an equality with other church organizations; and the last stage being some part which these kingdoms shall take in accomplishing her utter ruin as described in the next chapter under the name Babylon.

17. **For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.** To human view that can only take in brief periods of time, the agreement of these kings to "give their kingdom unto the beast," and their consequent "war with the Lamb," seem like calamitous events. But in the progress of his kingdom on earth, God is working out a plan; and he who perfectly comprehends the specific bearings of all events in this plan, doubtless has some ultimate good in view that shall be wrought out through these seemingly calamitous things. But there is a limit to this hostility, for when "the words of God shall be fulfilled" it shall cease; and then these kingdoms shall become possessions of the Lamb through the predominance of genuine Christian influences and power.

In order to identify these ten kingdoms it is necessary to consider their relation to the beast as successors and representatives of his departed power, their great change through being overcome by the Lamb, and the part they take in destroying the harlot. These characteristics require kingdoms of great stability and permanence; and therefore they could not be the short-lived and changeful ones first formed upon the ruins of the Roman Empire, but rather we must look for them among the more permanent ones that arose after this period of transition and disorder had passed away. And yet in their long course of existence, both in territorial extent and in forms of government, some changes may be expected; and in the latter respect, seem to be indicated by their great change in religious character.

THE WOMAN IDENTIFIED. V. 18.

18 And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

18. **And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.** While Rome may be regarded as the literal "great city," yet, as appears in the next chapter, Babylon is its figurative name. But the expression "great city,"

in this connection, is itself a representative name for that great Ecclesiastical State that sprung from the Roman Empire and inherited and has continued to wield so large a share of the old Roman World-power; and of this the Papacy may be regarded as the representative form. This is the eighth head or form, as we have already seen, of that long continued mighty dominion to which that order of churches represented by the woman is attached. And it is this loyal attachment of the churches that continues to sustain the Papacy, and more especially so as its temporal power may decline, as it necessarily must as the conquest of the ten kingdoms by the Lamb progresses. And though in this chapter the Papacy has been represented in the two-fold aspect of a world-power and a church organization to correspond with its object of increase and expansion in these two cherished directions, yet in reality it is but one in character and purpose.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BABYLON FALLEN. VS. 1–3.

1 And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

3. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

1. **And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power.** In this chapter "the judgment of the great whore," that has just been called "that great city," is continued under another symbolic name—"Babylon the great." Most likely this angel represents either some new power or some changed form of power that is already in existence that performs that which he

proclaims as having taken place. We have just been told in chapter 17:16, that "The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." Therefore, very likely the "great power" which this angel has is representative of the power of these kingdoms in its changed character that fits it to complete the destruction of the harlot. But of these unfulfilled predictions we can not speak with certainty.—**And the earth was lighted with his glory.** In whatever form this power may appear, it seems to be world-wide in its influence; and it is a benign, a heavenly power, dispelling darkness by lighting the earth with glory.

2. **And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.** A like announcement is made in chapter 14:8, and possibly the two announcements may refer to the same event; but from the connection in which that one stands, it is more likely that that one refers to her fall from her superior position of temporal power among the nations to an inferior one, as explained there; while this fall is her final one after which she shall exist no more.—**And it become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.** The site of the old Babylon was for a long time an unknown and uninhabited desolation. And the site of this mystical Babylon is here represented as a haunted place, unclean, and hence unfit for human habitation. And there seems to be an intimation that the character of the city corresponded with the doleful description of the site.

3. **For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.** The fall of this great wicked commercial city is well merited, for all nations have partaken in the corrupting traffic of her commodities as represented by "the wine of the wrath [passion] of her fornication," and the kings of the earth have been among her principal customers and patrons. And her commodities, on the one hand, have been of such a peculiar character as to incite the love and attachment of the nations to herself; and on the other, to stupefy their sensibilities as to the rights of those who have refused to participate in her corrupting traffic.—**And the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.**

"Are waxed rich" through the greatness of her luxurious trade, of which more is said below.

God's People Called out of Her. Vs. 4, 5.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

4. **And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.** The third seal, chapter 6:5, 6, was interpreted as representing this corrupt church organization, in which there is some saving truth mixed with its errors, but so scarce as to require starvation prices to obtain it. And from this passage we learn that some will be rich enough in grace and faith to look through these errors and obtain the endearing epithet,—"my people." May there not be many whose vision penetrates beyond the dazzle of her formal ritual worship, who therefore worship "in spirit and in truth?" Her leaders are mainly responsible for these errors. They "have taken away the key of knowledge,"—have forbidden the common people from using any such means for its acquisition as they might choose not to sanction; and therefore they are the more culpable ones; while among these other ones some worship fully up to the light given them, looking beyond the visible things in her worship with true faith to the Crucified One.

5. **For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.** God would not have his people involved in her destruction, therefore he calls upon them to come out of her; for her sins and iniquities have come up before him,—the measure of them is full,—and he is about to execute judgment upon her, the angel having already announced her fall. The representation given here brings into view a great wicked city devoted to destruction, among whose inhabitants are some Christians who are called upon to come out of her, lest they also be overtaken in the impending ruin.

The Measure of her Judgment. Vs. 6–8.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.

6. **Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.** These are intense expressions, and they imply the greatness of her guilt on account of her treatment of God's people, and they also indicate the greatness of her deserved punishment. As we have seen in chapter 17:16, most likely her destroyers are servants of the Lamb, who, as it seems to be implied, are to take into consideration all the loss—temporal and spiritual—and all the sufferings she has inflicted upon the saints.

7. **How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her.** Perhaps this comparison needs no words to make it plainer.—**For she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.** She has a high idea of herself. As a "queen" she regards herself as occupying a most exalted position of authority. And she looks to the future with full confidence of continued prosperity and unlimited perpetuation. Her boast that she is "no widow" and that she "shall see no sorrow," implies that she neither has suffered nor expects to suffer the loss of husband or children, prestige or wealth; but rather it implies that she expects to be continually provided for in all these respects, and her name and existence thus be perpetually transmitted. Perhaps like Babylon of old, she says in her heart: "I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children" (Is. 47:8).

8. **Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine.** Neither her exalted position of supremacy, nor her boasted exemption from bereavement and sorrow can avert this terrible retribution.—**And she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.** He who is King of kings can put it into the hearts of kings to "burn her with fire," as it is said they shall do, in chapter 17:16. The expression "one day," will be noticed under verse 10.

KINGS BEWAIL HER. Vs. 9, 10.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

9, 10. **And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning, Standing afar off for fear of her torment.** Although, as intimated above, kings shall "hate" her and "burn her with fire," yet not all kings feel thus towards her; for it would seem there are still some who have had intimate intercourse and close relation with her, who have partaken of her love and her luxuries, and on the other hand, doubtless have contributed both royal power and wealth towards her suport and aggrandizement; yet now her judgment is so terrible and complete that they can only stand "afar off" in utter helplessness and bewail her destruction. But perhaps it should not be regarded as to great a stretch of imagination to suppose that the prophetic representation here takes in all the long list of kings during her whole existence, "who have committed fornication and lived deliciously with her," as appearing and taking part in this plaintive lament. If so, the same may be said of the "merchants" and "shipmasters" noticed below.—

Saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come. In verse 8, it is said, "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day;" here, "For in one hour is thy judgment come;" and in verse 17, "For in one hour so great riches is come to naught;" and also in verse 19, "For in one hour is she made desolate." The "one day" in the first of these passages, may include the whole period of her decline; and the "one hour" in the last three, the closing period of its full consumation. These short expressions may seem to indicate that these periods of time may be short ones. But if we refer back to the "one hour" in chapter 17:12, we shall see that this expression may include a longer period of time than at first seems probable; for the period in which the ten kings should give their power unto the beast has probably largely passed into history, and therefore is now known to have continued through several centuries. Perhaps the words of Jesus to his disciples apply here: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). Therefore, though the times represented by these expressions are fixed and definite in the Father's plans, yet

it has not pleased him more definitely to reveal them to us. And though they should represent long periods of time, yet after all, the final fall of this mystical Babylon will, no doubt, be sudden and perhaps generally unexpected, although preceded by a long course of events leading to it.

MERCHANTS BEWAIL HER. Vs. 11–17.

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyme wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls!

17 For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

11–13. **And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her; for no man buyeth their merchandise any more: The merchandise of gold, and silver, etc.** The enumeration of the articles of merchandise which follow in the text above we need not repeat here. But they are such as would be bought and sold in a great commercial city full of wealth and luxury, and are representative of the traffic and wealth of this mystical Babylon. But the last article—"souls of men"—is a peculiar one; as standing in this list of commercial articles and especially as following the preceding one,—"slaves", or literally bodies,—it is but fair to give it the full force of meaning which such expressions convey. While often in the sales and purchases of human beings conditions either favorable or unfavorable to a preparation for future happiness may be imposed upon them, yet where is there another place or organization in which the soul after it had left the body has been made a subject of traffic? unless it may be among some of the heathen who believe in innumerable transmigrations of souls, where the priests pretend to know whether the transmigration is a happy or unhappy one;

and often represent their case to surviving friends as unhappy, "that they may extort money from them to procure the deceased a passage into a better state."

14. **And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee.** The wealth, the luxuries, and the pleasures are gone.—**And thou shalt find them no more at all.**

15–17. **The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! For in one hour so great riches is come to nought.**

SHIPMASTERS BEWAIL HER. VS. 17–19.

17 [second part] And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, a d sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,
18 And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city!
19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

17. **And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off.** The fame and rich traffic of this "great city" extends to every part of the earth; and the captains, and companies, and sailors of every commercial line or place are represented as participating in and being enriched by her traffic; and upon its loss they too bewail her from their standing place—"afar off."

18–19. **And cried when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What city is like unto this great city! And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.** Perhaps after what has already been said, this plaintive lament needs no further explanation.

REJOICING IN HER OVERTHROW. V. 20.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

20. **Rejoice over her, thou heaven.** In verse 5, it is said, "For her sins have reached unto heaven." Her sins have been espec-

ially noticed in heaven; and in a sense in which the word "heaven" is so often used in this book as representing the kingdom of God on earth, they have greatly disturbed and injured its interests; therefore heaven is represented as interested in her overthrow.—**And ye holy apostles and prophets.** These had foretold the evil she should do to the saints, and they had suffered like things from antichristian power in their own times, and therefore will be interested and avenged in the overthrow of this antichristian power. But doubtless these expressions not only include the interested dwellers in "heaven" and the "apostles and prophets," but also those who had lived all along in the times of this mystical city and suffered from her power and influence; to whom it can then be said,—**For God hath avenged you on her.**

HER UTTER DESOLATION. VS. 21-24.

21 And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.

22 And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee;

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

21. **And a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.** "Sea" is sometimes figuratively used as representing national life or existence, as in Daniel 7:2, 3; and if this "mighty angel" represents the same power as that which we have suggested may be represented by the angel mentioned in verse 1—or some similar power—then in all probability some form of power will be developed which will be cast into or distributed among the nations, that may stir up some violent national agitation in which this mystical Babylon shall "be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all." But however this may be, the act of this angel is significant of the violent and complete destruction of this "great city Babylon."

22, 23. **And the voice of harpers, and musicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, shall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftsman, of whatsoever craft he be, shall be found any more in thee; and the sound of a millstone shall be heard no more at all in thee; And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.** What words could be more expressive of her utter destruction, of the change from the hum and stir of pleasure and of active industry to the silence of desolation!—**For thy merchants were the great men of the earth.** This would give her prestige, wealth, and power, and thus enable her the more easily to deceive.—**For by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.** And therefore she merited this utter desolation.

24. **And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.** As the culmination of persecuting zeal came upon the generation contemporary with Christ, so that, in a certain sense, "all the righteous blood shed upon the earth" should come upon it, so, this "great city Babylon" is the culmination of antichristian power and persecution; and therefore, in a certain sense, the righteous blood "of all that were slain upon the earth" is found in her; for her persecuting guilt may be traced clear back in the line of her relation to her predecessor—the Roman Empire—to that of the same generation.

CHAPTER XIX.

HEAVENLY PRAISE. Vs. 1-6.

1 And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God:

2 For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

4 And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

1. **And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God.** "Alleluia" is a Hebrew word that means Praise ye the Lord. The judgment of the great harlot or "that great city Babylon," as she is called in the preceding chapter, thus far has been described mostly from an earthly point of view. The prophet has rehearsed the doleful lament of the kings, the merchants, and the mariners, who have "lived deliciously with her," or have been "made rich" by her merchandise. But now the point of view is changed from an earthly to a heavenly one, and her judgment is noticed as viewed in heaven. And while this event is doubtless noticed in the literal heaven with intense interest, yet perhaps the expression "in heaven" should not be so much regarded here as designating the heavenly as the earthly department of the kingdom of God; for the efforts of the people of God on earth are the chief instrumentalities he uses in accomplishing this object, and they are the ones that are the most immediately affected by it. And therefore, as step after step is taken in the progress of her judgment, there is joy in the heavenly kingdom on earth as well as in heaven itself; and especially might we expect this to be the case upon its full consummation, which will doubtless be a great victory for the saints on earth, when their influence and numbers will be vastly increased; and these considerations, in some measure, account for the intensity of this rejoicing and the great numbers that take part in it.

2. **For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.** Perhaps the voices of the redeemed in heaven and on earth who had suffered from the corruptions and oppressions of the great harlot, take a prominent part if not an exclusive one in this part of this ascription of praise; and as those who are personally interested, they ap

prove God's judgments as "true and righteous," and also the manner in which he "hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

3. **And again they said, Alleluia.** This Alleluia—praise ye the Lord—seems to be the beginning and the ending of this exalted tribute of approving praise unto the Lord our God for his righteous judgment.—**And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.** From the point of view now taken, her judgment is seen to be an eternal one. For, What do these various names represent but an evil organization composed of a succession of wicked men whom the righteous Judge will finally assign to the place "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched"?

4. **And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.** And now the representatives of the redeemed and of creation "round about the throne" also take part in worshiping him that sat thereon; adding their "Amen; Alleluia,"—their approval of the judgment, and their praise to the Lord. This allusion to these objects seen in the figurative heaven of this book as described in chapter 4, show that it should still constantly be kept in view when the attention is directed towards heaven.

5. **And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.** Most likely this voice from the throne represents a divine influence, as it were a new enduement, that goes forth from the throne and falls upon the servants of God on earth, through which very many of the inhabitants of the earth turn from their erroneous beliefs and worship and fear "our God." And this great religious movement contributes to the fall of the antichristian power noticed in this connection, and also to the preparation of the bride, the church, for her marriage to the Lamb.

6. **And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.** And now seemingly in response to the voice out of the throne, the prophet hears the sublime deep-toned voice of a great multitude, who also say "Alleluia"; thus adding their part to this ascription of praise. We now seem to be nearing the Millennial Period, for doubtless these several voices in this ascription represent movements in the

kingdom of God on earth that result in the marriage of the Lamb on the one hand, and on the other, in the destruction of the beast, and of the false prophet—perhaps another name for the organization in connection with the great harlot—and in the binding of Satan; events which seem immediately to precede and usher in the Millennial Period. And while the voices in the ascription seem to be uttered upon the final accomplishment of the intended event, yet doubtless, there should be taken into consideration the more or less long movement that trends up to the final consummation aimed at. And then upon the fall of these great antichristian organizations or powers, the voice of the great multitude might well and truthfully say as never before could be said, "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

THE MARRIAGE OF THE LAMB. VS. 7–9.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

7. **Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.** These are still the words uttered by the voice of the great multitude, but they tell of a new and happy event in the progress of the kingdom of God. The movements that culminate in the destruction of the great harlot, and, as we shall soon see, of all other antichristian organizations on the earth, also result in the removal of the corrupting influence they have exerted upon the Christian Church; and thereby she is purified and unified and made ready for a more intimate union with her Lord, as represented in "the marriage of the Lamb."

8. **And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.** Although the righteousness of Christ "is the righteousness of saints," yet right believing and right doing have much to do with the intimacy of their relations to him. Heretofore they have been affected by the errors and contaminating influence of the antichristian organization just destroyed. Through it denominational

differences sprung up and led to an unscriptural diversity of doctrine and church life, and to a wasteful division of Christian labor; but in the ruin of Antichrist these have all disappeared. And now, with one mind, and one heart, and in one organization, "his wife hath made herself ready."

9. **And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.** The speaker here is probably the angel sent by Jesus to signify these things to John, as stated in chapter 1:1. It will be a blessed privilege to be called to this marriage supper, for a happy change seems to be indicated in the condition of the redeemed; for, most likely, this is not a call merely to a brief supper; but rather it seems designed to represent a change of long continuance,—a change from a scanty supply of an unwholesome mixture of truth and error in the previous condition of things, to a full supply of heavenly provision in the future. And the intimation is that the redeemed are all called, and that there are very many of them.—**And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.** Although these sayings are given to us in figurative language hard to be understood, yet the time is coming when they will be understood; but, all along, with God they are definite and true, and shall not fail of fulfillment.

JOHN'S WRONG ATTEMPT TO WORSHIP THE ANGEL. V. 10.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

10. **And I fell at his feet to worship him.** Seemingly unmindful of the fact that the angel is not a divine person, and not a proper object of worship, and full of gratitude and reverence to him for unfolding these sublime visions to him and especially the glory of the last one in relation to the marriage of the Lamb, the prophet falls "at his feet to worship him".—**And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus.** Doubtless this is the angel mentioned in chapter 1:1, and also in chapter 22:9, where he says of himself, "I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book."—**Worship God.** He only is the proper object of worship, whether he be worshiped without distinction of persons or as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit.—**For the testi-**

mony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Jesus is the Divine Revealer in this prophecy, and not the angel who is only his commissioned servant. His witness is the principle thing, the spirit, the life, in it all; and he is the chief object in it as the Divine Director and Leader, hence the part he takes in it gives it its chief interest and importance. Therefore he and not the angel is the proper object of worship.

THE HEAVENLY LEADER. VS. 11–16.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

11. **And I saw heaven opened.** "Heaven" should still be regarded as the figurative heaven of this book, and as representing the kingdom of God on earth. And it seems to be opened anew for the purpose of presenting the judgment of the great harlot and the destruction of all antichristian power in a different and more complete view. Therefore this should be considered as another aspect of things we have already been considering, especially in the two preceding chapters and thus far in this one.—**And behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.** The "white horse" reminds us of a like one at the opening of the first seal, and doubtless the horse and rider of this vision are identical with those of that one. Perhaps then in a more gospel sense the rider "went forth conquering and to conquer," but now in a more martial aspect he is represented as going forth to his last great conflict with his antichristian enemies. Both in his own character and in his relations to men and especially to the saints he "called is Faithful and True", and therefore he perfectly knows when the character and conduct of his enemies are such that he has just cause to "judge and make war."

12 **His eyes were as a flame of fire.** Therefore he could perceive the right and wrong in all things with unerring certainty.—**And on his head were many crowns.** Thus are indicated his many conquests.—**And he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.** And thus is indicated the mysterious nature of his person.

13. **And he was clothed with a vesture, dipped in blood.** This "vesture" reminds us of Calvary's bloody conflict.—**And his name is called The Word of God.** This name recalls the Divine Word spoken of in the first chapter of John's Gospel, and thus identifies this horseman as the Divine Person through whom God has communicated with men.

14. **And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.** His followers are represented as mounted on horses like that of their Leader, and uniformed in the vestment of his righteousness, as the significance of "fine linen" has already been explained in verse 8. And being thus clothed these followers are indicated as the redeemed ones of earth, who are here represented as participating in the conquests of their Heavenly Leader. In a martial point of view, doubtless, these armies represent those who have taken part in the overthrow of hostile power as we have seen in various places in our progress through this book: especial instances of which are noticed in chapter 10, in the overthrow of the hostile power that opposed the rise of Protestantism; and in chapter 17, in the conquest of the ten kingdoms; as well as in the final overthrow of all antichristian power soon to be noticed in this connection. And in a more peaceful point of view, no doubt, they represent those who have taken part in the conquests of the Christian Church through both her home and her missionary work; to which may be added the power of individual Christian influence and effort in overcoming evils that impede the progress of the kingdom of Christ.

15. **And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations.** No doubt this sword represents the Word of God. And how he has smitten the nations with it! How he smote them with it at the Reformation! And how he has kept on smiting them with it since that time! And how one evil after another has gone down under the effective strokes!—**And he shall rule them with a rod of iron.** He rules the nations in accordance with the inviolable truths of his Word, which are as inflexible as

the rod of iron. This expression identifies the Heavenly Leader here with the "man child" of chapter 12:5.—**And he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.** He trod "the winepress alone" in the room of his saints when, as the "mighty to save," he made the sacrificial offering of himself for sin. But now full "of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," he treadeth it out to the nations that oppose the progress of his kingdom; until the vine of the earth shall be gathered, as stated in chapter 14:19, 20.

16. **And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords.** Although, as it is said in the second Psalm, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed,"—and not only against his Anointed, but against his redeemed also,—yet, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. . . Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Notwithstanding the counsels and combinations of the hostile kings of earth, the kingdom of the "King of kings" "is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

THE FOWLS CALLED TOGETHER. Vs. 17, 18.

17 And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God;

18 That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.

17. **And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.** From such a standpoint retained through a circuit of the earth, the angel's call would be as universal as the sunshine upon the earth. The object of this call is to typify the immensity of the contemplated carnage.

18. **That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great.** According to the view we have already expressed above, for a long period of time, the conquering work of the Heav-

enly Leader, who is the King of kings, has been in progress. Most likely he has proceeded from conquest to conquest until, as it were, the enemy is driven into his last lines of defense; who, therefore, in a last desperate effort, combines all the available antichristian forces of earth. And this call to all the fowls to come "unto the supper of the great God," indicates that the great decisive conflict between the forces of the King of kings and those of the beast and the kings with him, is now impending.

THE DECISIVE CONFLICT. VS. 19–21.

19 And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

19. **And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.** Undoubtedly the beast represents the civil form of that hostile dualistic power which was represented, as we have seen, by the two beasts of chapter 13, and that passed from the Roman Empire upon its disruption into the ten kingdoms that came up in its stead. But in their own war with the Lamb as related in chapter 17:14, the Lamb so far overcomes this civil form of power in these kingdoms that it becomes inferior to the power represented by the "mighty angel" of chapter 10 and the "two witnesses" of chapter 11:3–6; which, as we have interpreted it, is Protestant power. And meanwhile this hostile power seems to be more largely sustained and perpetuated by the ecclesiastical officials operating through the church organizations connected with it than through the especial favor of the rulers of the nations. But now, most likely through the efforts of the "three unclean spirits" as related in chapter 16:13–16, the beast element of power is permitted for a time to come into prominence again; and very likely becomes the slayer of the two witnesses as predicted in chapter 11:7–10. And this power is the most conspicuous one among the kings of the earth, whether it be mainly wielded by some one of the ten king-

doms—which is not unlikely—or by a limited number of them, or it be distributed through all the then existing ones. However this may be, this seems to be the leading power around which all the hostile powers of the earth gather "to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army." As already indicated, "his army" is composed of the Christian forces of earth, whether in martial or in more peaceful gospel array.

20. **And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.** The description of the false prophet as given here so far corresponds with that of the second beast of chapter 13, that this seems to be another name for that beast. The hostile civil and ecclesiastical power represented under these names became united under the Roman Empire, and are transmitted down through the intervening centuries to the time when they together shall be overthrown. They may be regarded as dualistic forms of the same Satanic power that, under the guise of religion, was yet hostile to the kingdom of God. And in all probability the antichristian systems of religion prevalent in the kingdoms confederate with the beast will be involved in the final overthrow of the beast and the false prophet; and thus all such organized opposition to him who leads the armies of heaven will be entirely removed from the earth, and

> Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
> Does his successive journeys run.

Undoubtedly again and again these hostile forces are smitten as indicated under the seventh trumpet and the seventh vial, but now the beast and the false prophet are taken by the rider on the white horse and his army, and—**These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.** This is the final disposal of the beast and the false prophet as seen in the vision. And it not only intensely typifies the end of their earthly work, but it also implies that the succession of men who have perpetuated the existence of the baneful power represented by these figurative beings still live in the future, who, doubtless, like their worshipers, "Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever" (chapter 14:10, 11).

21. **And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth.** As we have interpreted it, this sword is the Word of God; and while in all probability the beast and the false prophet have finally been slain in the violence of martial conflict, "the remnant" are slain in the way that the Word of God slays men. They would be thenceforth dead to the power they had previously served, but alive unto God. And thus this great victory results, on one hand, in the destruction of all forms of organized antichristian power on the earth; and on the other, in bringing "the remnant"—perhaps a great multitude—into the kingdom of Christ through the blessed influence and power of the Word of God. And thus the world is prepared for the Millennial Period, which is just at hand.—**And all the fowls were filled with their flesh.** So it appeared in the vision, undoubtedly for the purpose of indicating the completeness of the discomfiture and defeat of the enemy.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DRAGON BOUND AND CAST INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT. Vs. 1-3.

1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

1. **And I saw an angel come down from heaven.** As we have viewed it, thus far in this book the coming down of an angel from heaven or other similar angelic movement, has generally represented the exercise of some power on the earth for the accomplishment of some divinely appointed mission; therefore in harmony with this general rule of interpretation that we have followed in

such cases, most likely this angel represents some powerful divine restraint that is effectually to prohibit Satan for a season from continuing his malign work upon the earth.—**Having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.** The "key" is the symbol of his authority, and the "chain" indicates the object of his mission in reference to Satan.

2. **And he laid hold on the old dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.** This representation of the personal arrest of Satan emphatically shows how completely and thoroughly his baneful operations are suspended. Remarks on the thousand years will appear under verse 5.

3. **And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him.** Most likely this event will take place in connection with the destruction of the beast and the false prophet as described in the latter part of the preceding chapter. But it is especially mentioned because the binding and shutting up of the great leader of antichristian power on the earth will be an important event, and also because of its relation to other events about to be noticed.—**That he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled.** Nothing is said here about Satan's influence or power over individuals, perhaps because that aspect of his work does not so much appear in the visions of this book as that which is of a national character. While Satan has been constantly busied in trying to keep the hearts of men as individuals as much as possible alienated from God, and in harassing those whom the "Stronger than he" has taken from him, yet his most masterly efforts have been put forth to retain the rulers and the great men of the earth in his own kingdom, and to array them in hostility against the kingdom of Christ.

Perhaps the masterpiece of Satan's work in this respect has been the antichristian political organization represented in this book under such names as the "great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns;" and the "beast," likewise described; out of which sprung the great antichristian ecclesiastical organization noticed again and again in this book in its various aspects, and under various symbolic names. But Satan has not only been the originator of these, but of all other forms of religious and political antichristian power, whether exerted by the nations singly or in combinations with each other. But during the Millennial Period he

is shut up and his Satanic work ceases, and his kingdom on earth will be deprived of the leadership of his Satanic Majesty; and therefore will be in an unorganized and nonaggressive condition. And now that all these hostile systems or organizations have entirely disappeared through the great conflict that resulted in the destruction of the "beast" and of the "false prophet" as related in the preceding chapter, and there is no Satan at liberty to lead in the organization of others in their place, may it not be that the time has come when all the blessedness that the most grand and glowing prophetic language has ever portrayed will be fully realized?— **And after that he must be loosed a little season.** After the Millennial Period this "little season" will come, as noticed in verses 7–10.

THE FIRST RESURRECTION. Vs. 4–6.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power. but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

4. **And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.** In considering this, such questions as these arise: How many thrones? Who sat upon them? To whom was judgment given? And who were to be judged? Answers to these questions so far as they can be here given will appear further on. But we are not yet through with the "beast," for he is again referred to in this connection. — **And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.** In this connection two things seem to be worthy of especial consideration: The first resurrection, and the part the saints who have suffered from the power of the beast shall take in his judgment. We are now nearing if not upon the dividing line between the Present Dispensation and the Millennial Period. Great changes now take place in the condition of the human race. The prophet has just told us of the binding of Satan,

and just before that, of the destruction of the beast and his allies. Now, considering the beast of this book identical with the fourth beast mentioned in the seventh chapter of Daniel, and the little horn upon that beast as identical with the second beast of chapter 13 of this book, and also with the false prophet of chapters 16:13, 19:20, and 20:10, we shall find at least a partial answer in Daniel 7:9-11 and 26, 27, to the question,—What do these thrones and this judgment represent? "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. . . But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his [the little horn's] dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

In the visions of the preceding chapters the prophet has been describing the progressive stages and final consummation of the judgment of the "beast" and of the "false prophet" as seen from a lower point of view, but here the vision takes us up to the seat of judgment and brings to view thrones; one of which, and doubtless the principal one, is that of "the Ancient of days." And then let his own words and those of his inspired Apostles answer the question,—Who occupy these thrones with him? "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). Mark! in this passage the phrase "in the regeneration" does not refer to a past event but to a future one; hence, may it not refer to some such thing as this very regeneration, this renovation, this change or renewal in the condition of the world under consideration here? The expression "judging

the twelve tribes of Israel" does not necessarily limit their judging to the twelve tribes, but more likely is representative of and includes that of all other people. Again: "Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:28-30). "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev. 3: 21). "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels (1 Cor. 6:2, 3)? And now summing up the evidence before us: It seems that the vision takes us up to the throne upon which Christ the "Ancient of days" sits; and in the judgment upon the beast, and upon the false prophet, and upon Satan himself, he summons his apostles and saints who have suffered from their hostile power from their graves, and associates them upon thrones with himself in the judgment upon these mighty foes.

5. **But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.** Doubtless the impenitent dead "lived not again until the thousand years were finished." But the question,—Are all the pious dead raised at this first resurrection? is not so easily disposed of. That the "souls" seen "under the altar" at the opening of the fifth seal, and "their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were," are included in this resurrection need not be questioned. But still the question arises, Do not those "which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands," include all the pious dead? But this is only a part of the whole description; and its connection with the preceding part,—"the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God,—seems to imply that those who are raised up now may be only such as had passed through especial suffering from persecuting power; and therefore they have the privilege and honor of appearing as both witnesses and judges in the condemnation of this power, and then of living and reigning with Christ.

But on the other hand it may be said, The "beast" and "his image" are representative of all antichristian power that has

appeared upon the earth; and therefore all the saints, either directly or indirectly, have suffered from this power all through the course of time now passed; which, through the active hostility of Satan and his agencies, has been in all its course a period of severe trial; and therefore they all may be included in this description, and hence will have a part in this first resurrection, and henceforth live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. But whatever view we take of this first resurrection in these respects, nothing should be conceived in reference to it that will at all interfere with the continuance and progress of the human race during this thousand years. And also nothing appears here to show whether these thousand years are literal or representative years; but if the latter, which is not unlikely, compared with other expressions of time in this book, they represent what to us may seem a very long period of time. May not this be the redeeming time, the golden age, in the progress of the race, that shall make up for the period of ordeal and of only partial success that has preceded it?

6. **Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection,** Amidst imperfections and sufferings they served God on earth, but now they are happy, perfectly pure, and holy.—**On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ.** How different is the condition of these blessed and holy ones from that of "the fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable", etc., as described in chapter 21:8, who suffer "the second death". But from these statements we must not conclude that all who remain until the last resurrection will experience this "second death"; for there is yet to come the Millennium,—the most happy period in human history; and where then will appear the vast number of saints who die during this period? These risen saints rendered faithful and loving service to God while on earth, but now they shall render to him priestly service in heaven, worshiping him in his immediate presence, face to faee.—**And shall reign with him a thousand years.** "With him"; that is, with Christ. And now the important question arises, Where is Christ during the thousand years? Has the Lord descended "from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God" (1 Thess. 4:16)? Nothing so far in these visions has appeared to show that Christ has returned again to dwell with his saints on the earth.

That event so far as appears in this part of this book seems to take place as described in the next chapter, where it is said, "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven;" and, "I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

Although the binding of Satan at the beginning of the Millennium may soon become apparent by the lessened amount of evil in the world, yet in all probability, like most of the other events represented in this book, unknown in their beginnings, and to a great extent unrecognized in their progress, so this event and also this first resurrection may be unknown at the time of their occurrence to those then living; or, like the resurrection of Christ personally known only to a few chosen witnesses. Just before he went away, Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). In fulfillment of this promise and other similar ones, he has "come again," not now to the judgment of the last day, but to "receive" his now risen apostles and these now risen saints unto himself in the "place" prepared for them. It should not seem strange that the raised bodies of these saints should dwell with his own risen body in the place prepared for them, until the last day, and then return again "at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thess. 3:13); when also, doubtless the remaining "dead in Christ shall rise first," and join with them in this "coming." And, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4:17). And also, "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:54).

SATAN LOOSED. VS. 7–10.

7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

7. **And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison.** "His prison" was "the bottomless pit" in which he was shut up at the beginning of the thousand years.

8. **And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog.** All through the course of the world's history previous to the binding of Satan, one of the principal obstacles to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ in the world has been national hostility. Through the instigations of the Arch-deceiver false systems of religion have been conceived, so artfully planned as in some measure to meet the innate religious wants of man as they appear to his imperfect and depraved nature inherited from the fall; and corruptions have been introduced into the true system revealed in the Word of God. And these have been combined with secular power, and have been made use of by earthly rulers to uphold their authority, which has generally been regarded as pertaining to spiritual as well as to temporal things; and therefore these systems have been supported and defended and sometimes propagated by them. And through these various combinations of religious errors with worldly power, Satan has busied himself in confronting and opposing the progress of the kingdom of Christ. But during the thousand years in which he is bound all this shall cease. But when, at its close, he is loosed for a little season, he will again resume this work; and "go out to deceive the nations" and **to gather them together to battle, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.** But nothing appears here to show how long this "little season" will be nor by what combinations or means Satan will do these things. The word "battle" should be war; for this may be a more or less prolonged contest, in which many battles may take place.

9. **And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city.** This is figurative language setting forth the condition of affairs in a military point of view. The kingdom of Christ on earth is represented as occupying "the beloved city" with the accompanying camp, where the saints

defensively await the onset of the enemy in the war. Yet in all probability the kingdom of Christ, then as now, will be composed of churches scattered upon "the breadth of the earth," which the enemy will endeavor to encompass and destroy. But in this strait God appears for the defense of his saints as he has many times in the past.—**And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.** In past deliverances of the saints the Wicked One has been allowed to go his way, and form other hostile combinations; but this will be the end of his final effort.

10. **And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.** And thus ends Satan's malevolent career on earth, which, though described first, very probably takes place in close connection with the judgment described in the remaining verses of this chapter.

THE LAST JUDGMENT. VS. 11-15.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

11. **And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it.** We now come to the most majestic and awful scene in the history of the human race. The Son, to whom the Father "hath committed all judgment," has come and is seated "upon the throne of his glory." He who was once the lowly and despised "Son of man" now unquestionably occupies the most exalted position pertaining to humanity in the universe. Now there is unquestionable evidence of the truthfulness of his saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18).—**From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away.** From other Scriptures we learn by what means "the earth and the heaven" pass away: "But the

heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Peter 3:7 and 10). "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 1:7, 8). But although the earth and the heaven are to be dissolved in flaming fire, yet he that sitteth upon the throne is so far the most conspicuous object in this vision that they seem to flee away from the Divine Presence and entirely disappear.

And now the question may arise, Where then is the throne and the court for the assembling multitude before it located? Is it where—upon the rising of the dead in Christ at his coming—"We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thess. 4:17)? Or, Does the throne and the court with its assembling multidude seem to come in and take the place vacated by the vanishing earth and sky? The former seems the more probable. But he that sitteth upon the throne can select and prepare the place whether located in midair or elsewhere.—**And there was found no place for them.** With the complete passing away of the earth and the material heaven, the blasting curse of sin entirely passes away and is no more; and also preparation is made for a "new heaven and a new earth," soon to appear.

12. **And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.** Jesus himself speaks of this event in Matt. 25:31–46; in relation to which he said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations." Now all the dead—both the righteous and the wicked—have been raised, and all the living—both pious and impenitent—have been changed; and all stand before the Judge for their final sentence according to the record of each life.—**And the books were opened.** The books containing the revelation of God and of his will to men, whether given in nature, in his divine providence, or in his written Word. And also the books of remembrance written before God, containing

records concerning the righteous: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord harkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name" (Mal. 3;16). And also containing records concerning the wicked: "Behold, it is written before me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom" (Is. 65:6).—**And another book was opened, which is the book of life.** This no doubt is "the Lamb's book of life" containing the names of all the redeemed.—**And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**

13. **And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell** [hades] **delivered up the dead which were in them.** These specifications seem to be made in order to show that not one of the human race is missed or left out of that great assembly before the throne. But the voice of the archangel and the trumpet's call have been heard by every one in every place where it can be conceived that any dead may be. Not only the earth, but the sea also gives up the dead buried in it. And not only these material places where the dead have been deposited by their surviving fellow men through all time, but "death" itself and "hell"—the nether world, the place of departed spirits—are represented as delivering up "the dead which were in them."—**And they were judged every man according to their works.**

14. **And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.** Here "death" and "hell" seem to be impersonated to represent the impenitent ones of the human race who suffer "the second death," and the more impressively to set forth their final destiny.

15. **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.** This statement more fully indicates who those are who are represented by "death" and "hell," who suffer "the second death." The book of life contains only the names of those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb; all others are among those who are "cast into the lake of fire." In that great and terrible day what a vast difference there will be between those whose names are "found written in the book of life" and those whose names are not there. Blessed privilege! But it can only be secured during the lifetime of each individual. From this point of view, how important then is this lifetime!

CHAPTER XXI.

ALL THINGS NEW, AND THE TABERNACLE OF GOD WITH MEN. Vs. 1-5.

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

1. **And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.** It should be carefully borne in mind that the point of view still occupied by the prophet as to time, is just at the close of the great judgment day; and from that point of time, the principal object in view through the remaining portion of the book is to set forth the destiny of men according to the award of the righteous Judge as given on that great day. The prophet has already given the result as to one class—the wicked—whose names were "not found written in the book of life," who were "cast into the lake of fire." But now he turns to notice the destiny of the other class—the righteous—who were "they which were written in the Lamb's book of life;" whose blessed abode and happy condition are the principal themes of these two remaining chapters. The passing away of "the first heaven and the first earth" has already been noticed in chapter 20:11. But we should not conclude that they were entirely annihilated, but that they were changed and renovated; and that in their renewal, sin and all its baneful consequences were entirely destroyed, as more fully appears further on.—**And there was no more sea.** It would seem that such a change will be wrought in the physical condition of the earth, that the uninhabitable waste of waters upon it will be no more. But if we apply to sea a figurative sense similar to that in which it is used in chapter 13;1, there will be no more sea in that sense,—there will be no more wicked people out of whose tumultuous national existence such a terrible beast or other form of evil may arise to afflict God's people; for on the new earth shall dwell only "the nations of them which are saved."

2. **And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.** From the vast assembly composed of "the dead, small and great," raised up and gathered before the "great white throne," at the close of the judgment day the wicked have gone "away into everlasting punishment;" and now the righteous, in going "into life eternal," under the symbols "holy city" and "new Jerusalem," return to the "new earth" as their future home.—**Prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.** The Church,—the whole company of the redeemed,—is the bride of Christ; and now, without spot or blemish, arrayed in all that can beautify and adorn, his bride comes to this home of her husband, where she will dwell with him evermore.

3. **And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them.** Heaven now is the "new heaven," from which this voice comes. Having gathered "out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity" (Matt. 13:41), God himself—in the person of Christ, no doubt—now comes and personally dwells with his people. And this is the first place in these closing visions of this book in which this event is clearly indicated. The saints raised at the first resurrection "lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (chapter 20:4), doubtless, in his place of abode; but now "the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them," doubtless, in the place prepared for their abode. Therefore, now is completely and finally fulfilled the promise of Jesus to his sorrowing disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2, 3). Now the prayer of Jesus is fully answered: "Father I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17:24).—**And they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.** The relationship expressed here is that new, near, completed, personal one, which, based upon the promises of God, his people look forward to as the consummation of their highest hopes.

4. **And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there**

be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. Death, that trying event so much dreaded by every human being, shall be no more. No more shall such a thing be as the separation of body and spirit,—the body to return to the earth, and the spirit to pass into the unseen world, of which all we know is revealed to us through the glimpses given in the Word of God by the occasional lifting of the curtain, as it were, that hides it from our view. No more shall the "tears," the "sorrow," and the "pain," that enter into every life, and lead up to and accompany death, be experienced in this new, blessed abode; for "the former things"—the things that involved all this suffering—"are passed away."

5. **And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.** In making "all things new," sin and all its consequent evils are entirely rooted out of his kingdom. In the beautiful language of an old and familiar hymn,—

> "No chilling winds, nor poisonous breath,
> Can reach that healthful shore;
> Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
> Are felt and feared no more."—

And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. Most likely these words that come from the Enthroned One not only include the statement just made, "Behold, I make all things new," but also all that is said in reference to the various parts of the progressive work through which this end is reached; and these would include the judgment just described, and the assignment of men to their respective places of destiny,—things about which men have questioned and doubted and said, "My lord delayeth his coming;" and yet they surely will take place. And thus all the words of threatening against the wicked or of promise to the righteous will be truthfully and faithfully accomplished.

IT IS DONE. VS. 6–8.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

6. **And he said unto me, It is done.** The vast and stupendous problems relating to creation, to sin, to redemption, and to man's final destiny, have reached the period of completion; the aims and the ends of the Divine Being in all this progressive work are now plainly apparent; and his wisdom, his beneficent designs, and his justice towards his creatures, are now plainly seen in the result reached.—**I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.** Christ is "the beginning and the end" not simply in personal being: but he is the great designer and actor in all this creative, redemptive, retributive, and renovating work; not only in its beginning and ending, but also in all its various phases of progress and completion.—**I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.** The thirsty saints have drank by faith from this fountain in this life; but want of faith, sin, imperfections, and adverse circumstances have often interposed between them and their Saviour and caused them to receive scanty and unsatisfying drafts. But now, all these being removed, they personally dwell with him who is himself the source "of the fountain of the water of life," never again to thirst through separation from him.

7. **He that overcometh shall inherit all things.** There seems to be a contrast here between the overcoming child of God and "the fearful, and unbelieving," etc., mentioned in the next verse. While those meet with a terrible doom, the decided, persevering, and conquering saint will receive great reward as the inheritor of all things.—**And I will be his God, and he shall be my son.** This relation existed all the while between God and his believing child; but now faith shall give place to reality, and he shall see face to face. Under the immediate personal protecting and providing care of God as the bequeather of all things, the overcoming believer, in the near relation of sonship, shall dwell in the paternal inheritance prepared as his future home.

8. **But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.** From the brief notice just given of the happy condition of the overcoming saint as the inheritor of all things in the endearing relation of sonship to God, the attention is called to the other class described in this verse for the purpose of again briefly noticing their future condition. Save one

more brief mention, this is the last description of the character and destiny of the finally impenitent. Mark! they are not all classed as heinous sinners; some are only fearful and unbelieving; yet so far as their future abode is concerned, they are assigned to the same place as the abominably wicked. "In the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," and, "without"—referring to the gates of the city—are the last sad inspired descriptions of the place of their future abode.

THE HEAVENLY CITY. VS. 9-11.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

9. **And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.** The seven vials of the seven angels had been largely instrumental in destroying the evils that impeded the progress of the kingdom of God on earth, hence they might be expected to take a lively interest in the consummation reached so largely through their work. One of them has already shown the prophet "the judgment of the great whore" (chapter 17:1); and now he or another one of the seven shows him the bride the Lamb's wife.

10. **And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain.** The change of place is not a physical one, but only "in the spirit;" and this change is made in order that the prophet might have the best possible point of view from which to see the object about to be revealed to his sight.—**And shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.** The Church,—the whole multitude of the redeemed of all time,—is the bride, the Lamb's wife, which appears here under the figurative expression, "that great city, the holy Jerusalem." And thus under the similitude of a substantial and perfectly pure city is set forth the future secure and happy condition of the saints in heaven.

11. **Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.** From chap-

ter 4:3, we learn that he that sat upon the throne "was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone;" and further on in the description of this city, we are told that "the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Therefore this "stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal," is taken to represent "the glory of God" which filled the city with resplendent light. And thus we have brought into view one of the important provisions pertaining to the comfort and prosperity of a flourishing city; for without suitable provision of light its glory would be but dimly seen, and the industries and the felicity of its inhabitants could not appear to the best advantage.

ITS WALLS, AND THE GATES AND FOUNDATIONS THEREOF. Vs. 12–14.

12 And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates.

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

12, 13. **And had a wall great and high.** This wall represents the security of the city; for it was so "great and high," so impregnable, that no enemy could ever come within it. What the Lord said in relation to the defense of Jerusalem by the mouth of Zechariah the prophet (2:5), might emphatically be spoken of the defense of this city: "For I saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her." In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, Abraham is represented as saying: "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (Luke 16:26). Such are the defenses of the Heavenly City that neither the Arch-enemy who once entered Eden and introduced sin there, nor any other enemy, can ever pass them and enter into the city to disturb the holiness and the happiness of the saints in its blissful abodes.—**And had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels.** These angels stationed respectively at the different gates of the city as gate keepers further represent the provisions made for its security and the preservation of its purity.—**And names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of**

Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. This indicates that the city appeared in the form of a square with three gates on each of its four sides; in like manner appeared the city in Ezekiel's vision named "The Lord is there," the gates of which were likewise named after the twelve tribes of the children of Israel (Ez. 48:31-35), And from the second chapter of Numbers, we learn a similar order was also observed by the twelve tribes in their encampment about the Tabernacle in the wilderness.

14. **And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.** Paul advances a similar idea in reference to the foundation of the Christian Church when he speaks of the Ephesians as "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph. 2:20). Thus the various parts of this completed Heavenly City correspond with like parts as described in the process of erection during the course of time. The twelve tribes of Israel were conspicuous in the Jewish Dispensation; as comprehending the whole outward visible church, they were the principal ways of entrance into the kingdom of God; and in the Present Dispensation the teachings of the apostles are the foundation truths on which the Christian Church is built. Therefore, it is fitting that the names of the twelve tribes should be inscribed upon these gates, and the names of the twelve apostles upon these foundations; and thus also are the past and the present dispensations united in the building of this city of God.

ITS DIMENSIONS AND THE MATERIALS OF ITS CONSTRUCTION.
Vs. 15-21.

15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

18 And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;

20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

21 And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

15, 16. **And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs.** This measurement reduced to our standard of measure would make the extent of each side of the city fifteen hundred miles; or, if we take this measurement to be the distance round the city then the length of each side would be but three thousand furlongs, or three hundred and seventy-five miles in our measure.—**The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal.** And thus it would be a perfect cube, which would be the most symmetrical form and the most economical inclosure of space,—a consideration of importance in the estimation of thoughtful architects and builders. But in man's present modes of life and in the present condition of things, a city of such altitude would be wholly impracticable, and according to our ideas of things an utter impossibility. But in the future state, "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality," and these bodies shall have been "fashioned like unto his glorious body," the modes of spiritual life and the changed condition of things may be such that altitude in space may be of as much utility as length and breadth. And yet, this surpassingly beautiful city undoubtedly is, after all, but a figure described as of symmetrical form and as built of the most precious and durable material things for the purpose of representing the pure, the happy, and the glorious everlasting future inheritance of the saints.

17. **And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits.** The question may arise, What measurement is this? Certainly the length of the wall has already been ascertained, and if the wall was of the same altitude as the city then its height has also already been ascertained. But while the height of the wall need not necessarily be the same as that of the city, yet the city is represented as a perfect cube in form, and in order to preserve the cubical symmetry of the city it is necessary that either the buildings should be solidly constructed out to the wall in its entire circuit, or that the wall itself should rise to the entire height of the

city. And then again, a cubit is usually considered to be a foot and a half of our measure, and this would make the wall only two hundred and sixteen feet high, which would be a very insignificant height as compared with the great altitude of the city; and even if the cubits of the angel should be of much greater length than ordinary cubits, yet they would have to be out of all reasonable proportion in order to make the height of the wall at all correspond with that of the city. These considerations seem to favor the idea that this measurement is not made for the purpose of ascertaining the height of the wall but its thickness.—**According to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.** Originally a cubit was the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the extremity of the middle finger. And now, instead of using the golden reed with which he had measured the greater distances, the angel proceeds to measure the thickness of the wall by cubits or arm-lengths, which he could easily do by passing through one of the gates; the manner of statement also intimates that the angel's measure might vary from that of a man, perhaps being longer.

18. **And the building of the wall of it was of jasper.** "Jasper" has been taken as in some sense representative of the appearance of him that sat upon the throne, and also of the light of the city, of which it is said "the glory of God did lighten it." And now we are told "the wall of it was of jasper," thus indicating from these other representative uses of "jasper" that God himself is its defense,—is unto it, "a wall of fire round about." And a wall of this kind may properly be conceived as rising to the full height of the city, and also as not obstructing the prophet's vision so that he could not see the precious material and the bright glory within; for the jasper wall itself was but the glory of God in an assumed material form in order to present the perfectly secure defences of the city in such a manner as to come within human comprehension.—**And the city was pure gold.** What a city! represented as built of one of the most precious, beautiful, and imperishable substances of earth.—**Clear as crystal.** Always bright, always untarnished.

19, 20. **And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, saphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolyte; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the**

eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. Most likely that part of the wall represented as built of jasper in verse 18, was the upper part built upon these foundations; and the numbering of the foundations very likely begins at some gate and applies to that part of the wall between each gate respectively as one would pass around the city. And each foundation is "garnished" or adorned either by having a stone of the kind mentioned conspicuously placed in it; or more likely, each foundation between the several gates appeared as one great precious stone of the specified kind.

21. **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl.** This again is symbolism, for no pearls of such size are found on earth. A pearl is a most valuable thing among men, and therefore is another substance taken to represent the superlative preciousness of the Heavenly City.—**And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.** Not only "the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass," as we are told in verse 18—referring there perhaps to the building of the city—but the very pavement of its streets is also "pure gold, as it were transparent glass." And thus the strongest, the most durable, the most precious, and the most beautiful materials of earth are represented as used in the construction of the several parts of this city; and these also represent the security, the perpetuity, the wealth, and the glory of the future home of the saints. What a trancendently rich, pure, and bright home it must be!

ITS TEMPLE AND LIGHT. Vs. 22, 23.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

22. **And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.** On earth it was needful to set apart a place or places where the Lord should "cause his name to dwell," where the redeemed might congregate and worship; but in heaven there will be no need of a place to remind of God's presence; no need of a shelter from heat or cold or storm; no need of any especial place in which to congregate for worship; for the redeemed in heaven will be one vast, united, worshiping assembly; and the Lord God and the Lamb in personal presence will be the

object of adoration, before whom in every part of the city the great worshiping assembly shall reverently bow.

23. **And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.** The superlative glory of God in the person of the Lamb will fill the Heavenly City with floods of light of such transcendent power and beauty that the feeble and varying lights of earth will be outshined and needed no more.

Its Inhabitants, its Glory, and its Purity. Vs. 24-27.

24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.
25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.
26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.
27 And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

24. **And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it.** These are the redeemed from the various nations of the earth, whose national identity, it would seem, will not be lost, but whose national hostility will; for now, in the resplendent light of the Heavenly City, they shall walk together in unity of heart and purpose.—**And the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.** While many of the kings of the earth have "set themselves . . . against the Lord, and against his Anointed" (Ps. 2:2), by opposing the interests of his kingdom on earth, many also have "set themselves" for the Lord, and for his Anointed, by promoting the interests of his kingdom. And these shall delight to beautify and enrich this Celestial City of the Great King with the richest adornments that their positions of influence, and of authority, and of wealth enable them to bring.

25. **And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.** No wily tempter nor prowling thief, who loves darkness in which to do his darker deeds, can ever enter there. To its surpassing light no hostile enemy ever dare approach. No night there, blessed words! Who can tell how often they have given comfort to the shipwrecked mariner, who has anxiously watched and longed for morn; or to the wanderer in unknown paths of forest depth or desert waste; or who can tell how often they have soothed the sufferer who has tossed through the

weary night on his sleepless couch of pain? But in that blessed home in the Heavenly City there shall be no weary night watchings for imperiled or suffering ones; for "there shall be no night there," neither sorrow nor pain.

26. **And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.** Such excellent characteristics and such treasures as truly glorified and honored earth's nations and as are in harmony with the construction and character of the Celestial City, shall "the nations of them which are saved" bring into it; and thus shall their work be in harmony with that of the Divine Architect and Builder.

27. **And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.** Now the words of Jesus as recorded in Matt. 13:41-43, shall have been fulfilled: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." Nothing unholy shall enter there; only those who, conscious of sin, have come to Jesus for cleansing and holiness; and whose names have been written in his book of life.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PROVISIONS FOR CONTINUED LIFE AND HEALTH IN THE CITY. Vs. 1, 2.

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

1. **And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.** Although we begin another chapter, yet the prophet is still describing what was shown him in the Heavenly City. In his talk with the woman of Samaria, Jesus said: "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). These little springs from Jesus the living source, flowing in each thirsting human soul that comes to him for the water of life, have all now been transferred to the Heavenly City in gathering the redeemed there; and now, the water of life appears there as a pure everflowing river in exhaustless supply "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb;" thus plainly indicating that he who sitteth on the throne is the author and perpetual sustainer of eternal life.

2. **In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life.** A statement that makes a single tree stand "in the midst" of a street and "on either side" of a river, seems inconsistent. To obviate the difficulty some have supposed the word "tree" to be used in the sense of wood or forest, and hence have conceived both sides of the river as bordered with trees. But it is doubtful if the word translated "tree" will bear such a meaning when used in the singular number; and then again, if we consider that this tree represents Christ as the Tree of Life, it would be inconsistent to represent him by many trees. But nearly the same words that are used here to designate the position of the street and river in respect to that of the tree of life are used by the same writer, in John 19:18, to designate the position of the two malefactors in respect to that of Jesus; there their position is said to be "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst;" "in the midst" being used in the sense of between, which is not an unusual meaning of the word translated "midst" either used alone or as the objective word of a prepositional phrase, as in 1 Cor. 6:5, where it is rendered "between." Now, adopting these renderings the passage would read: Between the street of it and the river, on either side one, was there the tree of life. Thus the street and river would run parallel with each other, and the tree of life would stand on the bank of the river, perhaps in close proximity to the throne, with the street on one side of it and the

river on the other side. Thus the water of life and the tree of life would be accessible and free to all the vast numbers who would frequent this broad or main street running through the city as the center of its life and business.—

Which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month. Such continued oft recurring crops of varied fruit show such abundance that there never will be any scarcity or want of the fruits of the tree of life there.—**And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.** These are "the nations of them which are saved," who "walk in the light of it" (chapter 21:24); and who have already been healed, but who will, with such health preserving provision, be continued in health for evermore. Thus the tree of life which disappeared from the Earthly Eden, whose seed was preserved through the fulfillment of the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, now reappears in the Heavenly Eden with its abundant fruits and healing leaves; thus showing that perpetual life and health are the happy lot of its redeemed and glorified inhabitants.

ITS PROVISIONS FOR PERPETUAL PURITY AND HAPPINESS. Vs. 3-5.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him;

4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads.

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

3. **And there shall be no more curse.** In making all things new, the curse which, on account of man's disobedience, God pronounced upon "the ground," and under which "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now," and which is the cause of all the sorrow, the pain, the death, and of every evil existing in the present state of things, is forever removed; and the purity of the Heavenly City, as already noticed, shall forever be preserved.—**But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.** The oneness of the Divine Persons associated on the throne is indicated by the pronoun "his" in the next clause; doubtless God in the person of the glorified Redeemer exercises the functions of a just and holy government in the Heavenly City.—**And his servants shall serve him.** This service will not be a mercenary, selfish one,

neither will it be a toilsome, wearying one, but rather a joyful, loving, and unwearying one.

4. **And they shall see his face.** "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face." Then "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Blessed privilege! forever to dwell where we can see the face of our Redeemer and our God, and enjoy the intimate association that this expression implies.—**And his name shall be in their foreheads.** In their foreheads as a distinguishing mark and perpetual unmistakable proof that they are his. In chapter 13:16, we are told that the worshipers of the beast bear his mark; why should not the servants of God also bear the honorable and precious name of their God and Redeemer?

5. **And there shall be no night there.** Darkness is in some sense a type of imperfection. The weariness of all living creatures that demands the rest of night for its relief shows imperfection. But in the removal of the "curse," and in making "all things new," all these things will be removed; and the servants of God through endless day, and in never wearying service, "shall serve him."—**And they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light.** No lights of earth will be needed in the Heavenly City; for, as we have already learned in chapter 21:23, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."—**And they shall reign for ever and ever.** It is said that the saints raised at the first resurrection "shall reign with him a thousand years;" but now it is said of all the redeemed in the Heavenly City, "And they shall reign for ever and ever." These passages with others of like import seem to indicate that the redeemed, in some sense, will be sharers in the throne and government of their Redeemer. But, as "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," and, as "sons of God," "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." But when we come into the "purchased possession," it will be time enough for us to know just what inheritance these close and endearing relations will bring.

THE SAYINGS OF THE PROPHECY OF THIS BOOK. VS. 6-10.

6 And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

7 Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.

9 Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

6. **And he said unto me, these sayings are faithful and true.** The description of the Heavenly City is now finished. And, in point of time, we return from contemplating things away on beyond the great judgment day to the time of the writing of this book; the few remaining verses of which contain the closing words of the angel, of the writer of the book, and of the Lord Jesus himself. By "these sayings" are meant the words of prophecy contained in this book.—**And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.** If the words of the prophets were true, then the words of this book must be true also; for both have the same divine origin. These impressive words, most likely of Jesus himself, testifying to the truthfulnes and divine origin of this book, together with others of similar import at its beginning, seem to anticipate the fact that, on account of the difficulty of understanding and explaining its mysteries, there would be a disposition on the part of some to place a low estimate upon its importance if not wholly to reject it as a part of the Inspired Word.

7. **Behold I come quickly.** The Lord's shortlies and quicklies often seem long to man in his impatience to see the end reached,—seem long to him in comparison with his own brief existence here; seem long to him when generation after generation comes and passes away, and nation after nation rises and falls, and great changes take place in the religious systems in the world, before the mysteries of these sayings—of which that of the Lord's final coming will be the full consummation—are finally and completely solved; although the process of solution is continuously going on as mystery after mystery is unfolded. But when compared with the immeasurable eternity of God's existence these shortlies and quicklies are but brief spaces of time.—**Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.** Although these saying are principally prophecies, yet they are delivered in such a way as to be full of doctrinal and practical truths. But through the insidious

perversion of these truths and the prevalence of the ensnaring errors noticed in this book, there would be great danger that when the Lord should come—in whatever way or whenever he might come —he would find that there had been failure, either wholly or in part, to keep these sayings. Therefore, blessed is he who perceives and observes the truths contained in these sayings; and so discerns the right way, and distinguishes between those who are the true servants of God and those who are only so-called or pretended ones; and who has the wisdom to join himself with the true ones, and with them to keep "the sayings of the prophecy of this book."

8. **And I John saw these things, and heard them.** And therefore as an eye witness and from a personal hearing he could certify to the fact that these visions had really been seen and these sayings had really been spoken as recorded in this book.—**And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things.** Perhaps John was either so amazed at the wonderful things shown by the angel as to forget that he was an improper object of worship, or else he did not distinguish between him and the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who himself is sometimes represented as the speaker and revealer of these marvelous things.

9. **Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.** The question may arise, Does the description that this angel gives of himself point him out as Moses, or Elijah, or some other one of the ancient worthies, whom the Lord has sent to show unto his servant the things which must shortly be done? Very likely. But if not one of the redeemed sons of men, he was undoubtedly a being sustaining a like relation of loving loyal service to God.

10. **And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.** Whether the words of this verse and the next were spoken by the angel or the Lord Jesus himself does not seem clear; for along here, it is somewhat difficult to trace the personal identity of the speaker so as exactly to determine whether it is Jesus himself who speaks or the angel as his representative. At the time of the writing of this book, the process of fulfillment of these prophecies, no doubt, had already begun, and should continue on in its various stages of progress to its full

completion; therefore it was the Lord's design that men should have "the sayings of the prophecy of this book" so that they might identify the events foretold as they should be unfolded in the process of fulfillment, and to some extent at least, foresee their coming and character. And if by divine direction given in connection with the writing of this book, it should remain unsealed, why should any power on earth assume the authority of withholding it from any class of the people?

CHOICE AND FINAL CONDITION. Vs. 11–15.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be rigteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

11. **He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.** This book has treated of two classes of persons, described here as the "unjust" and the "filthy" on one side, and the "righteous" and the "holy" on the other side; and the manner in which they have been treated of in the book as well as these expressions, indicate that they belong to the one class or the other according to their own choice. But these expressions together with the general teachings of the book, also indicate that the result of this choice will be a state in which the condition will be unchangably fixed, according as the character resulting therefrom is good or bad.

12. **And, behold, I come quickly.** Now the Lord Jesus himself speaks, and all the rest of the chapter except the closing sentences seem to be his words. Again we have the expression, "I come quickly," for remarks on which see verses seven and twenty.—**And my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.** The Divine Speaker seems to be contemplating the works of men with reference to what they would be as portrayed in the prophecies of this book; and as the point of time from which these

words were spoken was when this book was written, the works would then be spoken of as being in the future. Christ, to whom the Father "hath committed all judgment," will make the award to each individual "according as his work shall be," whether unjust or righteous, filthy or holy, as already represented to us in the vision of the great judgment day (chapter 20: 11–15); to which, doubtless, these words ultimately refer. And yet, in some sense, all along through the progress of the events foretold in this book Christ is present with his reward; but not with his final one in which all will be righted up on principles of strict justice, this will be done on that great day.

13. **I am Alpha and Omega the beginning and the end, the first and the last.** Again we have these impressive expressions, which seem to be inserted here not only to denote the eternity of Christ's existence but also to intimate that he who is "the beginning and the end,"—the Creator and the Judge,—sustains such a personal relation to the passing events, and as the continuously existing Witnesser of them he has such an accurate knowledge of them, and of the part that each individual takes in them, that he is perfectly qualified to give the "reward" due to each individual in perfect justice to the character he has chosen and formed.

14. **Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.** The Revised version follows the original text given on the first clause, and renders it "Blessed are they that wash their robes." All through the course of time, the redeemed who are cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus Christ, who "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," are they that truly "do his commandments" through their obedience to the terms of the gospel of salvation. And now in the final award of each individual they are the ones who "have right to the tree of life," and are entitled to "enter in through the gates into the city," into the saints' eternal home, the glorious New Jerusalem just described, wherein stands the tree of life. Blessed privilege! Blessed home!

15. **For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.** Having confirmed what has already been said of the future happy reward of one class, Jesus now turns to give a few last brief words

in confirmation of what has already been said of the future condition of the other class. And these last words of inspiration in relation to their final condition, from the mouth of Jesus himself, leave this class "without" the Heavenly City, with the vile and the wicked as their associates and companions.

LAST IMPRESSIVE WORDS. Vs. 16-21.

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.

20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

16. **I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches.** These things were not to be sealed up, nor withheld from the churches; but, at first, distributed among the Seven Churches, and from them to the churches of all time, as the principal medium of transmission; so that all may have the benefit of their instruction, of their encouragement, and of their warning.—**I am the root and the offspring of David.** In his divine creative power Christ was the root whence David sprung, but in his human nature he was his offspring; and therefore a being of eternal existence as well as the promised Messiah of Israel,—a being who now occupies a higher throne than that of David, inasmuch as in him divinity and humanity are combined; and therefore he is one who is thoroughly competent to confer all the blessings he has ever promised upon those who obediently trust him, and to execute all the threatenings he has ever pronounced upon the disobedient.—**And the bright and morning star.** The Old Testament prophets had foretold the coming of a glorious Latter Day, which at the time of the writing of this book as compared with its future long extended brightness and glory was then but in its dawning. And this Latter Day was ushered in by the coming of Christ in fulfillment of such prophecies

as Numbers 24:17–19: where it is said, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel;" and, "Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." And now the Star had come, and the morning was passing and the Day dawning. And "He that shall have dominion" was beginning to work out its acquisition as set forth in the visions of this book, and not least among the means used for this purpose would be the calls of the next verse.

17. **And the Spirit and the bride say, Come.** The Holy Spirit and the Church of Christ call, extending the earnest and solicitous invitation, "Come."—**And let him that heareth say, Come.** Let him repeat the invitation and pass it along so that others may hear the call and "come."—**And let him that is athirst come.** Jesus said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7;37); and again, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14). And this living water Jesus freely gives to every soul that comes "athirst" to him, and in the Heavenly City it becomes an exhaustless river.—**And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.** Whosoever will, this includes every willing soul,—a broad and free invitation that leaves no one out and no excuse for neglect.

18. **For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.** The injunctions of this verse and the next need not be regarded as applying only to these Apocalyptic visions; but undoubtedly they anticipate the collection of all the inspired Scriptures into one book, and thus apply to the whole. In adding to or taking from the things written in this book, each one so doing would affect his own personal interest in these things; but the influence of so doing would not be confined to the doer himself; but as this influence should broaden out and extend down the course of time and affect the lives of vast numbers, the culpability would be proportionately increased. And many of the plagues that are written in this book have come upon men by adding to or taking from the things that are written therein; and woe to the authors of these changes, for they shall suffer the plagues and lose the blessings spoken of in this book. And by this mention the Lord Jesus classes such ones as among the conspicuous evil doers described in this book, trans-

gressors whom God shall recompense with its extreme penalties. Thus we see what a high estimate the Lord places upon his Inspired Word, and how carefully he would guard it from change or desecration by men.

19. **And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.** While these injunctions apply to every addition to or diminution from the Bible, by whoevor made, and however small, and however limited in the extent of its influence, yet, perhaps, they also especially anticipate some things which we have noticed in our progress through this book; such as the corruptions in doctrine and practice which perverted the Christian Church, and the withholding of the Bible from a large class of the people by those who claimed a part in these things.

The description of the persons enjoined from adding to or taking from this book,—as those who hear the words of the prophecy of this book, and those who have or claim to have a "part" in "the book of life," etc., seem to indicate that among its worst enemies would be those who had some knowledge of its contents, and who claimed a "part" in its blessings. Therefore, perhaps it is not too much to say that some of the greatest evils noticed in this book have had their origin among those who, in other respects, were real friends. Synods, churches, or individual leaders, would introduce some practice, or copy some Jewish or Gentile custom, or place especial importance upon some doctrine, or upon some passage of Scripture, perhaps with a view of meeting some seeming demand or necessity of the time, but which contained—it may be—some unperceived germ of error, that, like the tares in the parable (Matt. 16:24–30), unperceived, grew among the wheat until some of its evil fruits began to appear; and then it would be so firmly rooted along with the truth that it could not be rooted up. And such small beginnings in error prepared the way for greater ones. How important then the position of Christian teachers and leaders, especially the more prominent ones to whom large classes of the people look up as especial instructors and guides.

20. **He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.** Again the Lord repeats his promise "I come quickly," this last time introducing and emphasizing it with a "surely"; as if antici-

pating that as generations come and go, as the years and the centuries speed on in their unvarying course, there would be some who would say in heart if not in word, "My Lord delayeth his coming"; and others who would question his coming at all. As the apostle says, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. 3:3, 4). But notwithstanding this, the last utterance of Jesus to his servant as recorded in his Word is, "Surely I come quickly." To the scoffer and the unbeliever his coming is a dreaded event, but to his people a joyful one; for it will be the consummation of their hope of full deliverence from sin and all its evils, and their happy entrance upon the blissful life so beautifully portrayed in the closing chapters of this book. And therefore they can joyfully and heartily join in the response of the Apostle,—**Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.**

21. **The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.** This book, doubtless written in the form of an epistle, was addressed to "the seven churches which are in Asia" (chapter 1:4 and 11); and through them to the churches of all ages. It begins with a salutation to them, and closes with the apostolic benediction upon them. And with this benedictive prayer and blessing the Book of Inspiration closes.